9,000 ...that's 3,000 more than our rival
UK & INTERNATIONAL EDITION

The Industry's Largest Circulation Trade Weekly

Issue 71 Friday February 4 2000

MCV
The Market for Home Computing & Video Games

Bart Saunt on Virgin Megastores' move to hold at £34.99 on Gran Turismo 2

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Activision admits merger talk

Trade rumours of union with THQ confirmed, but fellow US publishers fail to thrash out a deal

MERGER TALKS have recently taken place between Activision and THQ, but any potential deal has been ruled out.

Industry speculation about the two US publishers joining forces has been rife over the past couple of weeks and MCV can reveal that further consolidation in the market had been a distinct possibility, with serious discussions taking place throughout last month.

The merger has now been ruled out, but an Activision insider says there may be talks with others.

Activision plans to be a $1bn firm by 2001

"Activision could swallow up other companies or be swallowed up itself," said the source. "It has a great portfolio of products and licences, is one of the most under-valued operations in the market and has a relatively low share price. It's no wonder that we are continually being targeted, but there is a distinct possibility that we will be making acquisitions ourselves. We have a corporate strategy to be a $1bn company by 2001. That's our focus."

THQ is constantly the subject of acquisition talk. It has a similar market cap to Activision (around $400m) and many strengths, but is still considered to be a small player given the on-going trend towards global consolidation of publishing and distribution.

Trade-ins grow

DIXONS has decided to enter the trade-in sector.

The chain shocked rivals last week, not only by advertising Gran Turismo 2 at £28.95 but by offering a £5 discount for any consumer bringing in an old game when making the purchase.

A similar discount will apply to Toy Story 2, out today, whilst the trade-in will apply too.

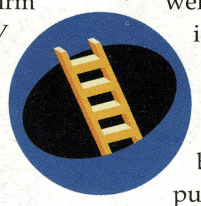
Dixons was initially hoping to retail Gran Turismo 2 for £34.99 but dropped its price to match Woolworths and Comet.

■ Gran Turismo 2 broke all UK records, notching sales of over 115,000 units in its first weekend.

Gameplay blitz

FRANCE, Italy, Scandinavia and Spain look set to be conquered by the Gameplay.com brand between now and the end of the year.

Having already moved into Germany via its acquisition of the highly rated mail order firm and retailer Joysoft *(MCV 28/1)*, Gameplay will place 7.7m new shares in early March to raise an extra £50 million of investment cash.



The placing will take place on March 2nd.

Dip for console mags

Rise of the casual gamer set to hit new ABCs for specialist press

THE MAJORITY of video game magazines are due to announce circulation decreases from today.

"Although the PlayStation sold well over the Christmas period, it is being bought by non-passionate people who don't necessarily buy games mags. There will be drops across the board," said Future's group publisher Robert Price. "But the PC sector is buoyant, which will be reflected in the figures."

Despite the apparent gloom, the latest launch into the console sector is claiming major success.

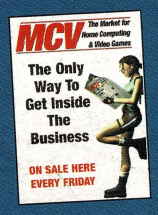
According to managing director Marc Swallow, Computec Media UK's PlayStation World sold 65-70 per cent of its 300,000 run after just 10 days on sale last month.

"This is particularly encouraging, at a time when we expect to see some disappointing PlayStation ABC figures soon, showing declines by at least a couple of percentage points throughout the sector," he enthused.

Even the hugely dominant OPM will see decrease

MCV targets new business readers

FROM NEXT FRIDAY, MCV will be available in selected London newsagents. New readers will be students looking for career opportunities in the business, plus senior personnel from industries such as movies, music and video.



The first issue to go on the business press racks of 100 London outlets will be published next Friday. MCV joins other leading business publications such as Campaign, Marketing and Music Week which derive a small proportion of their circulation from the news stands.

Cover price is £2.50 and the launch will be accompanied by dedicated POS in-store. Advertising through leading business magazines will follow later this month. MCV's current circulation is over 9,200. An official ABC of around 9,000 is expected to be announced next month for the audit period running from July-December 1999.

Devcon returns for Euro PS2 studios

SONY has set a date for its second PlayStation 2 conference.

The three-day event, called DevCon2k, takes place at Bedford's Millbrook Proving Ground from March 22nd-24th.

Sony's Devcon '99 last August attracted massive representation from the software community. Devcon2k will open the format wider via seminars on Middleware tools, programming, graphics and production issues.

■ MCV will be publishing a UK software development special issue on Friday March 3rd, with extra distribution at the Games Developers Conference in San Jose, California.

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You know how to make people happy, don't you. You know how to get in their hearts and minds, get them excited, wear them out. You've had more lovers than Casanova. Or Mae West.

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So if you really are right up there with the best, don't be shy. Show us what you've got. Because if you're impressed by what we've been up to so far (Colin McRae Rally, TOCA2, Micro Machines, IMA Manager), not to mention our prodigious growth (global sales up a massive 250% in the space of just one year), then we're sure you'll be even more impressed by what's round the corner.

And once you see the size of your rewards package, you'll soon see we're not playing around.

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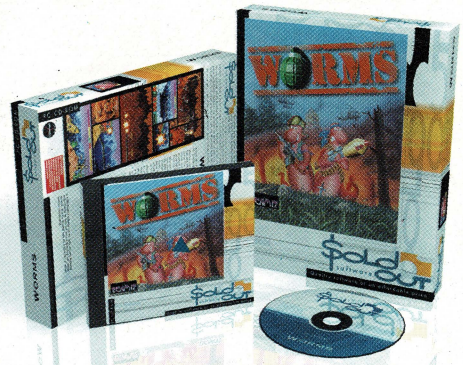


Sold Out thanks everyone who helped make us Number One!

Worms notched up 55,457 units in 1999, making it the best selling budget PC title of last year!

Source: Chart-Track Annual Report 1999

Proven quality, massive range, unrivalled value.

Sold Out software

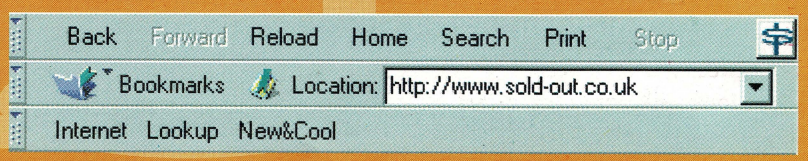
When Sold Out Software launched, we promised quality, range, and value. We delivered and the consumers love it!

We have produced over sixty renowned products that are every bit as good as their higher-priced rivals but at just a fraction of the cost. The fact that twelve titles from last year's overall top fifty — including the Number One position — is solid proof of this.*

We have an increasing line-up of proven classics, covering every genre and compatible with various machines specs, so there really is something for everyone. Also, with prices between five and ten pounds, customers really can afford to act on impulse.

They don't stop at buying just one or two games either as the quality and value of the Sold Out range ensures significant repeat purchases.

To order any titles from either the original (£4.99) or Extreme (£9.99) labels, or to find out about our forthcoming big-name releases, contact Centresoft on 0121 625 3388 or Peter Ball on 0171 928 3993 now.



* *Source: Chart-Track Annual Report 1999*

EB to widen Street presence

More space in Sainsbury's and Debenhams due, as chain focuses on third party partnerships

ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE looks set to announce a drive into more Sainsbury's outlets and further concessions within Debenhams - but has ruled out any move into Marks & Spencer following its recent hiring of Sir Richard Greenbury.

The specialist games retailer already has space within 18 Debenhams stores, along with racking in 32 Sainsbury's stores.

A surprise leap into M&S was being tipped by some, following the arrival of its former chairman as a non-exec director (MCV 28/1). Greenbury is the second M&S man to join EB, as former MD Henry Lewis joined the board last year. Links are strong, but EB has firmly denied any deal.

Meanwhile, as many as 50 Sainsbury's stores could carry games by Easter, while at least a handful of additional Debenhams stores will get computer and video games concessions.

"This is a major focus for us this year," said EB's chief exec John Steinbrecher. "The Debenhams concessions and Sainsbury's racking have been very successful.

"We are continuing to talk to other retailers about similar opportunities and we are being called constantly from companies interested in working with us. We are seriously considering several possibilities at the moment.

"But, we have to be selective about the retailers we work with. They have to treat their customers in the same way that we do."

Buyers back supermarkets

UK CONSUMERS would spend more on games if their local supermarkets stocked a range of software and hardware.

Some 995 consumers responded to our Consumer Watch survey conducted via Games Domain *(see page 19)*, with 72 per cent admitting that if the grocery sector stocked this industry's products they would buy more.

The result is good news for the likes of Tesco, Sainsbury's and Safeways which have all increased their commitment to the market over the past year, but will also encourage those games firms who are actively targeting this particular sector of retail.

"These results underline the fact that there is huge incremental business out there to be won," pointed out Phil Philippou of specialist supermarket supplier Cork International.

"This is a market that just can't be covered fully by the specialist retailers. Now that the penetration of PCs and PlayStations in UK homes is so deep, we are at the point where these sort of products are ubiquitous."

Deering to speak at Cannes event

MILIA kicks off in Cannes in just over a week, and the show has gained a major boost to its new conference programme.

Sony Europe boss Chris Deering and 3DO Europe president Steve Fowler will be speaking at the Think.Tank event.

Deering will take part in the View From The Top session on Monday February 14th. Fowler will be part of a panel rounding off the two day event.

Meanwhile, Britsoft firm Empire has confirmed it will be exhibiting at Milia for the first time this year.

Mothercare targeted

CONCEPT INTERACTIVE is looking to distribute its new £5.99 kids PC range through Mothercare.

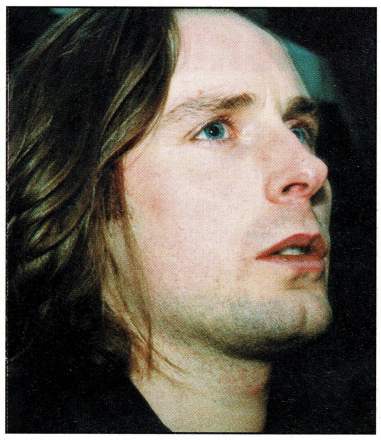
The publisher is entering the cut-price market on the back of its Lemon Dog range of games, with six titles released this week.

Concept has already secured distribution through BHS, Hamleys, Bentalls and Selfridges.

It is looking to place FDUs in stores with strong parent and child crossovers, with managing director Pat Fox admitting the firm is already in advanced negotiations with both Mothercare and Tesco.

Virgin holds out at £34.99

THE RETAILER which first instigated PlayStation software discounting last summer emerged as one of the only chains to hold Sony blockbuster Gran Turismo 2 at £34.99 last week.



Saunt: "Others throwing away margin"

And, according to Virgin's senior product manager Bart Saunt, any loss in market share on the title was negligible and was easily made up for in revenues.

"As I have always said, we will price every product at the point our customers are willing to pay," he explained to MCV.

"For a Triple-A title such as GT2, customers will pay £34.99. Others felt that the market could not sustain that price, but they have just thrown margin away."

Rival EB had been planning to hold at £34.99 and was hoping that other retailers would take a similar standpoint. However, the chain was forced to price-match the discounts offered by Woolworths, Comet and Dixons.

Software Revenues

Week ending January 29th

	Last Week	This Week
Total Market	£14m	**£17.4m**
Full Price Console	£5.3m	**£8.9m**
Full Price PC	£5.1m	**£5.2m**
Budget Console	£2.3m	**£2.1m**
Budget PC	£1.3m	**£1.2m**
Cumulative 2000:		**£69.3m**

Top Earners This Week

1.Gran Turismo 2 (SCEE) PSX
New UK record-breaker **£3,857,953**

2. FIFA 2000 (EA/THQ) PSX/PC/GBC
79% of sales on PSX **£234,192**

3. Medal of Honour (EA) PSX
45% increase in sales **£194,185**

4. Tomorrow Never Dies (EA/MGM) PSX
Another 6,000 sales last week **£181,559**

5. Champ. Manager 99/00 (Eidos) PC
170,000 sales to date **£167,813**

Source: MCV/ChartTrack/Elspa

Share Prices

	Price 29/1/2000	One week % change
US	**$**	**%**
3Dfx	8.75	-2.78%
3DO	7.938	-3.42%
Acclaim	3.344	-14.39%
Activision	16.375	8.26%
Adrenalin Interactive	6.188	23.76%
Brilliant Digital	24.625	-16.88%
Creative Technology	16.5	-1.49%
eGames	2.438	-11.35%
Eidos	9.5	-16.21%
Electronic Arts	71.063	2.99%
Electronics Boutique	16.5	10.92%
Funco	11	-8.33%
GT Interactive	2.438	2.65%
Hasbro	15.5	0.00%
HearMe.com	25.438	-8.74%
Intel	94	-4.02%
Intergraph	5.438	6.11%
Interplay	3.906	0.80%
Mattel	10.875	-8.42%
Microsoft	98.25	-5.30%
Midway	14.688	-9.61%
Number Nine Visual Tech.	0.15	47.06%
Recoton	10.813	-9.89%
S3	14.625	-13.17%
Silicon Graphics	9.875	-10.23%
Take-Two	11.813	-0.52%
THQ	21.844	-9.92%
Toys "R" Us	10.063	-4.73%
Walt Disney	36.75	12.21%
UK	**£**	**%**
Elect.Boutique	0.385	28.33%
Eidos	5.63	-0.57%
Future Net	8.45	-0.59%
Gameplay.com	6.825	5.41%
Online	4.425	56.64%
Pure Entertainment	0.9	-9.55%
Rage	0.625	-11.35%
Sci	4.625	-1.39%
France	**Euro**	**%**
Cryo	48.75	18.58%
Infogrames	33.12	2.86%
Kalisto	125	19.05%
Titus	55.9	8.23%
UBI Soft	49	-2.00%
Vivendi	100	11.11%

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Comment

An insight into how Dixons thinks

WHEN ANY COMPANY as influential as the Dixons Stores Group decides on changes to its strategy within the interactive entertainment market, people will always watch closely. And given that DSG is not the most forthcoming of companies when it comes to communications in this corner of its diverse world, people have a habit of jumping to conclusions, too.

Dixons' games personnel understand this, but rightly get frustrated when the full picture is not understood by its suppliers, rival retailers or trade hacks like me. Thus, it is interesting to report on just what drove Dixons to go to £28.95 with Gran Turismo 2 last Friday. Sony has brilliantly pulled off the most successful launch of any PlayStation release in the UK to date, with first weekend sales in excess of 115,000 units. No sane person would argue that it needed any discounting.

DSG chose this game as the signal to roll out a trial of its new trade-in service for PlayStation customers across all Dixons stores (but not Currys or PC World). Punters can get £5 off any game on the format if they return it and buy a new release.

What's Dixons playing at? Well, it's running its business in the most efficient and responsive way, is the answer, even if this causes ripples elsewhere.

Dixons said that they would have sold GT2 at £34.99 if Comet and Woolies hadn't moved to £28.99.

Dixons told me this week that they would have sold Gran Turismo 2 at £34.99 if the Kingfisher-owned Woolworths and Comet hadn't moved into 2000 persisting with the PlayStation pricing policy that has had everyone scratching their heads for some time; Top 5 PlayStation releases at £28.99, all other full-price PlayStation games at £29.99 and all full-price PC games at £29.99.

GT2 was advertised by Woolies and Comet at £28.99 a week before launch, so Dixons had to follow suit. The firm concedes that other chains held at £34.99, it even believes that the customer would have accepted the game at a slightly higher price quite readily. But Dixons is not the sort of company that likes to have adverts in The Sun revealing that it charges more for big name products than its biggest High Street rivals.

Simple as that. Dixons will sell Toy Story 2 at £28.95 today too, and cannot see any change to its policy occurring until Woolies or Comet come back up, which looks unlikely at the moment. EB and Game will probably price match in key locations, whilst it will be interesting to see if the entertainment stores like HMV and Virgin Megastores can hold their nerve at £34.99.

As I have said before, we might just have to get used to this new lower pricing, and that puts pressure on Sony to at least have some dialogue with the buffeted third party publishers about royalties. The sliding scale due to be discussed at the European licensee pow-wow (MCV 28/1) sounds like a good idea.

And as for Dixons trialling trade-in, well, why not? EB has made it a successful and profitable part of its business. It probably won't ever be as important for Dixons, but any business looking to run itself properly has to review its options at all times.

That's why MCV this week has announced its own trial, taking our magazine to carefully selected London newsagents in order to reach people looking for a job in the industry, or professionals outside the business who want to observe what goes on.

To stay a market leader and build profits, companies have to be flexible. Sitting back and commenting on what everybody else does just isn't good business.

Stuart Dinsey
Stuart.Dinsey@mcvuk.com

Talking Shop

Top marks for Sega at ATEI

IF EVIDENCE was required that video games permeate all areas of the entertainment industry, it could be found at the ATEI and the British Toy Fair events in London last week.

Certainly the biggest hit at the Toy Fair, and much in evidence on virtually every stand visited, was Pokemon. Those retailers who think that sales reached a height over Christmas better think again. Pokemon was absolutely everywhere.

Naomi, Sega's arcade version of the Dreamcast, stood out from the crowd at the ATEI. And judging by the quality of new titles, the Dreamcast has a very healthy life ahead of it. Dead or Alive 2, Sega's new fighting game, is truly amazing and will knock Soul Calibur for six when it hits the format. Other titles such as Jumbo Safari and Airline Pilots are very different games which will bring new converts to this format.

Ferrari 355 is a conventional race game but the astonishing detail and realism are superb. There were a couple of strange titles such as Brave Firefighters, a bit of a Time Crisis with hoses, and Emergency Call Ambulance. But the real oddball, and one which would be my tip for a hit, is Eighteen-Wheeler, which is Crazy Taxi in an 18-wheel truck.

Don McCabe
don@chipsworld.co.uk

Best ever year for LMP

Figures for 1999 show accessories firm on top in key sectors

FULL-YEAR ChartTrack figures for 1999 reveal that LMP has achieved the top position in the steering wheel market.

The company, part of the Radica group, beat off competition from the likes of Interact, Mad Catz and Microsoft to grab an impressive 26.8 per cent of the market, worth around £4.2m in sales.

And the company also affirmed its number one position as a third party manufacturer in the Input Devices By Label (Units) chart with 257,355 sales as well as in the Input Devices By Label (Value) chart and Joypad Sales By Label (Value), according to ChartTrack.

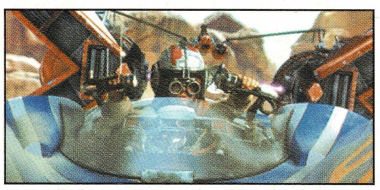
£4.2m sales last year in just the steering wheel sector

"We're all very proud, and we'd like to thank all our customers with which we enjoy a close relationship," commented an LMP spokesperson.

Lucas and Eidos back Sega

DREAMCAST was boosted this week with Lucasarts confirming its first title for the Sega console and Eidos unveiling another.

Lucasarts has ended months of speculation by confirming a conversion of its Episode One: Racer for the format. A release date has yet to be confirmed.



LucasArts' Racer is headed for the Sega console

Eidos has secured the European, US and Australian publishing rights for ASCII's Sword of the Berserk. The game is a 3D action title based on a popular Japanese comic book and has been a permanent fixture in the Japanese Sega charts since December.

Berserk joins Soul Reaver, Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation and Resident Evil Codename: Veronica as part of Eidos' Dreamcast line-up. It continues Eidos' unrivalled support of the format, with the ASCII deal continuing Eidos' pledge to back the Sega system.

Watts gives games a shock

FOLLOWING its recent MBO, Startle boss Barry Watts has revealed its plans for future expansion, with games likely to take a backseat.

The company aims to provide a business to business service and become a leading e-commerce brand. Through its partner Track One Logistics, Startle already distributes Sega Dreamcast exclusively to the multiple sector.

It also provides digital content services for a number of clients including the BBC.

Startle primarily distributes music and video products with games not a primary focus.

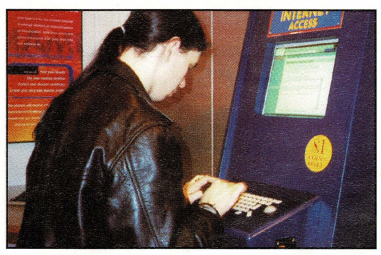
"Games for us account for around 15 per cent of our total turnover," said Watts. "We will expand that, but it's not our greatest concern. The industry is too volatile at the moment."

Konami hooks pubs to Net

THE RECENT ATEI show at Earls Court saw Konami unveil its Public Internet Access kiosks, due to be installed in pubs and amusement arcades.

The kiosks allow for quick Internet surfing and email, using ISDN lines. Konami will charge £1 for 10 minutes use of the service.

Additionally, the arcade division of the firm is installing Internet functions within its latest arcade cabinets, such as Dance Dance Revolution and sniper game Fatal Judgement.



Pubs will get Internet kiosks courtesy of Konami

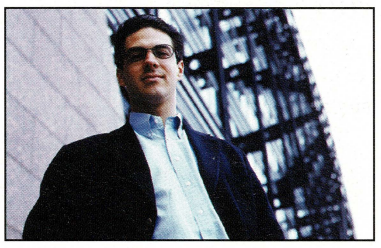
Negative online report attacked

Mattias Lamotte responds to claims that security fears and scepticism are holding back e-tail

ONLINE retailer URWired has responded to a survey claiming the Net is failing to generate sales.

A report by corporate law firm Edge Ellison claims the number of e-commerce sites creating direct sales is still very low. It surveyed 500 online retailers and noted that e-commerce operations were only responsible for one per cent of retail transactions.

The report blames customer worries over online data security and a general scepticism of the apparently hot new medium.



LAMOTTE: Business rising at a staggering rate

Mattias Lamotte, founder of URWired, argues that the report fails to take into consideration the on-going growth of user numbers.

"Whilst Internet market share in games sales may be relatively low at present it is actually rising at a staggering rate at URWired," he told MCV this week.

"Our sales have doubled month-on-month since August 1999 and we are projecting a tenfold increase in sales in 2000."

"With our latest figures for December of over 3.6 million hits and comfortably over 800,000 page impressions, we're extremely confident that the retail trend will swing heavily towards the online sector much quicker than some people think," he said.

Blockbuster extends PC, plans for PS2

BLOCKBUSTER is expanding its PC rental and retail outlets to 180, and is already re-organising in preparation for PlayStation 2's arrival this September.

The video rental giant stocks a limited number of full-price PC chart titles and budget releases across its stores. Following an extremely successful Christmas period, this will now be extended to nearly a quarter of the chain's 670 stores. Console titles already occupy 320 Blockbuster outlets.

"The PC, from a retail view, has been excellent for us," commented general manager of Blockbuster's games division, Gerry Berkley.

"We've kept things tight, but the results have easily exceeded our expectations."

Berkley is confident that games will continue to play a large part in Blockbuster's future. The chain recently dropped audio CDs as it expands DVD. And this can only be to the console market's favour.

"Music was only ever a small offer, but DVD has been very successful and sits alongside games perfectly," he said. "We're looking forward to the release of PS2 and think that, with its DVD compatibility, the two will sit together well. Games and DVDs will be racked closely together."

Blockbuster will rack games and DVDs nearby

Education is so Crucial

BUDGET specialist Crucial Entertainment will double its PC education range this year.

A total of 20 products are currently available, licensed from Havas Interactive's Knowledge Adventure series with at least another 20 expected.

"We're hoping for 40 titles in total for this year," Crucial's MD Ray Macintosh told MCV. "We're adding to the current range a selection of titles from Havas, and we're looking at other sources too."

The addition of new educational product could lead to a price cut for the first batch of Crucial titles. These are currently selling at £9.99 and £12.99.

McIntosh: Adding to super-budget range

Six new PC games are also due in February bringing the total number available to 21.

Scooby THQ

THQ has become the latest firm to snap up the Scooby Doo licence. Its first titles will arrive towards the end of the year. Southpeak Interactive, Ubi Soft and Mattel Interactive all have various rights to the Scooby Doo licence as well.

Downing leaves for Westwood

ELECTRONIC ARTS has just appointed Simon Downing as the European marketing director for its Westwood titles.

He joins EA from Acclaim and replaces Graham Struthers, who recently left for a similar post at Crave. Downing assumes the role on March 6th and will oversee the release of the PC version of Nox, released later in the month.

He will also work on looming PC and next generation titles, including Command & Conquer: Renegade, Buccaneer Bay and Dune 3000.

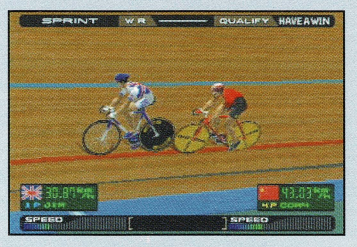
"I am very pleased with the appointment of Simon Downing to this key Westwood position," commented EA's vice president for European marketing, Frank Sagnier, to MCV.

"I have worked closely with him when I was at Acclaim myself and know that he is a professional with an excellent knowledge of the European market.

"I am certain he will do an excellent job for Westwood."

Newswires

Konami rejigs schedule



Konami's International track and Field 2 has been moved back to March 3rd. The game was originally slated for a February 11th release, but has moved for logistical reasons. The Game Boy version of Konami Winter Games has been pulled forward into the vacated February 11th slot.
Konami: *01895 470500*

Daikatana hits N64

As the trade continues to wait for Eidos Interactive's PC version of Daikatana, Planet Distribution is set to ship the N64 version on April 7th. Planet has secured the exclusive distribution of Kemco title and it is likely to easily beat the PC version into stores.
Planet: *01992 707400*

Four-play from Team PSX

Centresoft's Team PlayStation sales team is currently pushing four new releases from Sony. Gran Turismo 2, Cool Boarders 4, Tiny Tank and Ehrgheiz are all being supported by promotional activities by the team. And despite the fact that GT2 has already arrived, with huge success, support through retail will be on-going for many weeks yet.
Centresoft: *0121 625 7106*

OEM deals for Guillemot

Guillemot has announced two new OEM partners. IT solutions specialists Elonex and Viglen will now use Guiillemot's graphics cards in their systems. The firm has also announced a 36 per cent year on year rise in turnover during its first quarter results.
Guillemot: *0208 686 5600*

Homeworld wins award

Havas Interactive's space combat title Homeworld has been decreed Strategy Game of the Year by Computer Gaming World Magazine. Whilst undoubtedly a critical success, the game disappointed somewhat at retail.
Havas: *0118 920 9100*

Samsung takes Nvidia

Samsung and Nvidia have signed a deal allowing the former to bundle Nvidia's TNT2 Pro graphics cards with its M6300 PCs. The firm's GeForce 256 GPU has also been awarded the 1999 Analysts' Choice Award for best 3D accelerator by MicroDesign Resources.
Nvidia: *01 408 615 2630*

3DO powers on

Ambitious 3DO has reported record-breaking revenue growth in its Q3 results. Global revenues rose 300 per cent from $10.3m to $41.2m and a net income was achieved of $1.4m. This compares to losses of $5.7m in the same period last year.
3DO: *0207 761 9300*

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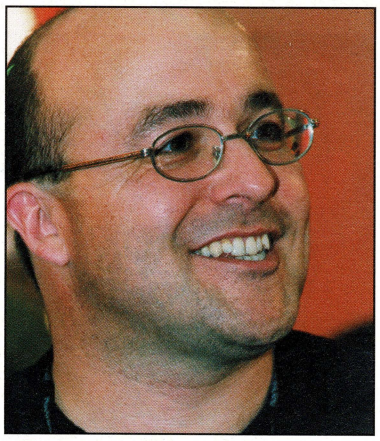
Take 2 rolls on, but without N64

New Psygnosis signing demonstrates format strategy, as PC, Dreamcast and PS2 get thumbs up

TAKE 2 has bolstered its heavy support of the PC format by signing Rollcage Stage 2, whilst also backing PS2 and Dreamcast - but the N64 has been ditched.

The new Rollcage is being developed by ATD, with Sony-owned Psygnosis holding the publishing rights until now. Both games will be released in March.

Meanwhile, Take 2's European boss Kelly Sumner has outlined the firm's next generation plans. This includes six titles for Sega Dreamcast, including conversions of GTA2 and Wild Metal Country and two launch titles for PS2.



SUMNER: Confirming first batch of PS2 releases

"We have a very strong release schedule for Dreamcast and will have two launch titles for Sony's machine," he said.

Sumner confirmed conversions of Hidden & Dangerous 2, GTA2, Midnight Club and a new off-road racing title called Getaway as the firm's first PlayStation 2 releases, with four more being considered.

But as Take 2 moves towards the new formats, it has become one of the first publishers to admit it has dropped the N64 format.

"It is just no longer part of our plans," said Sumner

■ The PlayStation version of Rollcage Stage 2 will be published by Sony in March.

Mattel holds the Softkey to success

THE SOFTKEY budget range is to be bolstered by Mattel Interactive with new product additions and a dedicated sales team.

ChartTrack figures placed the label at number one by both value (14.7 per cent) and units (16.5. per cent) across all genres in 1999.

A dedicated Softkey e-tail website will also be established in the year's first quarter and the value line will be represented by an exclusive sales and marketing unit, called the Value Sales Team.

New titles due this quarter include two Railroad Tycoon games, Blinky Bill's Nursery, and Play & Learn With Blinky Bill, plus new Clip Art and National Geographic products.

■ Meanwhile, Mattel has been awarded the rights to produce a PC title based on the interior design based magazine Real Homes. The title, called The Real Homes Magazine's 3D Designer, allows users to experiment with home design, renovation and interior decorating. The product will retail for £29.99

Upgraded Airpad looms for retail

New versions and colours for innovative controller

AIRPAD is to release an updated version of its Sony PlayStation controller in time for the summer.

The new product will feature a simple switch rather than a multi-calibration button toggle system and will come in Purple, Blue, Green, Orange, Red and Black.

The pad boasts motion control, allowing users to tilt the unit in the required direction rather than use a conventional d-pad.

The coloured Airpads will be available in May or June and will retail for £10 less than the original system at £14.99.

PC, Dreamcast and PlayStation 2 versions will be revealed in the next few weeks via exclusive distributor Joytech.

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Hetherington faces up to Digimask

Psygnosis co-founder and respected software development guru backs Brit start-up behind innovative facial animation system

GARY Bracey's new venture Digimask has impressively moved to appoint Ian Hetherington as its non-executive chairman.

Hetherington joins the firm as it takes the wraps off its titular Digimask facial animation system. The Digimask is a software-based utility that allows users to use a photo-realistic image of their face in games.

The firm is now in the process of recruiting software developers to take on the system, while Hetherington will take a business development role.

Ex-Telstar Electronic Studios and Infogrames development director Gary Bracey is the brains behind the Digimask concept.

Customers submit a digital image and email it to Digimask who duly recreate it as a 3D object. The generated file is then stored on either a hard drive or memory card and will be automatically detected by Digimask-compatible games.

HETHERINGTON: Business development role

The firm is targeting PC and PS2 owners and is looking to roll out the software to developers in the summer. It has already got a number of leading teams on board and Hetherington's appointment coincides with a push to attract US and Japanese talent.

"We are delighted to have a man of Ian's calibre and experience on the Digimask project," Bracey told MCV. "His help will be essential in developing our business strategy and rolling out the software to publishers. Ian brings great vision and organisation to the table."

Sequels and more from Sony

CURRENTLY ENJOYING record-breaking success with Gran Turismo 2, Sony has mapped out its first and second party publishing plan for PlayStation - with over 30 new releases expected this year.

The fourth Coolboarders hits stores on February 25th, while ATD's Rollcage Stage 2 is wheeled out on March 10th. March also sees the third in Psygnosis' Colony Wars series, with sequels to Syphon Filter and Medievil emerging in April.

May sees the release of Sony's first original title of the year. In Cold Blood is an espionage adventure designed by Revolution and sends an M16 agent into a tiny republic in the USSR on a spying mission. A sequel to Namco's GunCom 45-compatible Time Crisis, currently entitled Project Titan, will also hit stores in May.

Beyond this, Sony has high hopes Legend of Dragoon, a Final Fantasy-style RPG developed by SCEI and Chase the Express, a tactical action game billed as 'Metal Gear Solid meets Syphon Filter.'

Sony's support of the £19.99 Platinum range also continues, with Ridge Racer Type 4, Spyro the Dragon and Crash Bandicoot 3 released in February and March.

Sony's in-house publishing programme post-GT2 includes the third instalment of the Colony Wars series

SCi gets behind GBC and PS2

SCi is the latest firm to commit to Game Boy Colour and has also confirmed its first PS2 titles.

It joins Codemasters and EA as new additions to the handheld fold with Alfred's Adventure, Boing and the classic SWIV hitting Game Boy this summer. A handheld version of the recently signed Thunderbirds licence will also appear.

Also, the hotly-tipped PC hope Titanium Angels and a Thunderbirds title are being lined up for the new Sony format.

Traffic builds

FLIGHT SIM specialist The Associates has nipped in to sign a deal with Italian developer Lago to manufacture and distribute the popular FS Traffic add-on for Microsoft's Flight Simulator.

The add-on has hitherto only been available in the UK as a download from the Lago website, but The Associates reported this week that it has successfully persuaded the developers to release a retail boxed version.

FS Traffic will become available on February 24th with an RRP of £19.99 expected.

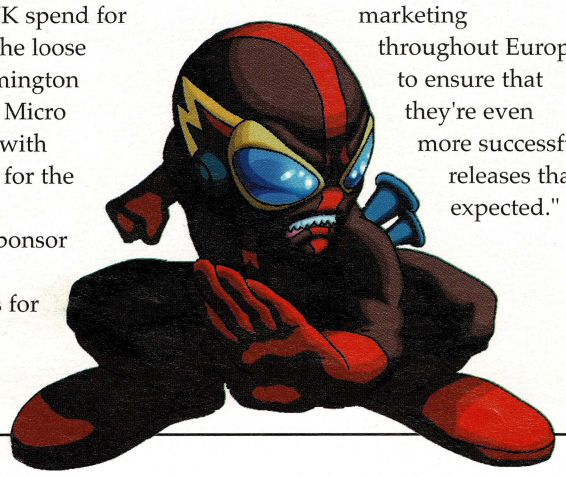
Coders in at double

CODEMASTERS is warming up two of its most important racing franchises in preparation for their Easter launch.

Micro Maniacs and Colin McRae Rally 2 arrive in March and April respectively, with Codemasters pinning over £1m in marketing spend across the two titles. The firm has earmarked £350,000 for the UK spend for Micro Maniacs – the loose sequel to the Leamington firm's best selling Micro Machines series - with £750,000 set aside for the McCrae sequel.

McRae's Ford sponsor and Codemasters have joined forces for a series of major promotions. A TV ad campaign is already being prepared, plus car, specialist and lifestyle press.

"Both Colin McRae 2 and Micro Maniacs have powerful heritages and they're our big guns," said European marketing manager Sarah Nugent. "They will be incredibly important releases and we will work them very, very hard through sales and marketing throughout Europe to ensure that they're even more successful releases than expected."



Indies get a little helper

WITH UNREST amongst indie dealers due to software discounts, Ultimate Distribution is aiming to provide the best prices possible for the sector - even if it means using the grey market.

The company aims to provide new release and back catalogue PlayStation, N64 and Dreamcast software and hardware.

"With ever-lowering High Street price points for software, pricing and supply has to be at the front of any retailer's mind," said director Spencer Guinchard.

The newly founded distributor is currently dealing with larger independent stores and sub-distributors but is looking to take on more indie accounts over the next six months.

Game Nation goes Dutch

A BELGIAN games retail chain has moved into 2000 with keen ambitions for further expansion - and to move into The Netherlands this year.

Game Nation was founded in 1996 with the opening of its first store in Leuven, near Brussels. It has quickly expanded to boast some 13 outlets in Belgium.

Six stores were opened last year, with the firm planning at least another five openings in 2000, not to mention a move into The Netherlands.

"There isn't anything like us there, apart from department stores and the independents," said buyer David Verbruggen.

"It doesn't really boast a specialist chain, so we think that there is huge potential for us."

Verbruggen believes that the success of the chain in Belgium has been achieved due to the three directors' passion for games and to the chain's commitment to customer satisfaction.

"Most of our shops have a network of PCs so that customers can play against friends on games such as Half Life, Quake, etc.," he added.

"This creates a special atmosphere in our shops and makes them a nice place to go."

Further ambitions for the chain include a broadening of its product range. It will begin selling and renting DVD videos this year, along with audio CDs.

ESLPA Crime Unit hits Belfast

THE LONG ARM of ELSPA's Crime Unit has extended to Belfast, resulting in 19 raids and seizing counterfeit CDs with over £600,000.

The raids covered locations in Belfast, Ballymena Ardglass and Omagh. Some 16 people were arrested and will face prosecution for copyright and trademark theft.

"On behalf of the UK industry I wish to extend our thanks and gratitude to the Royal Ulster Constabulary," commented chief investigator Terry Anslow.

Taiwan seeks Euro connection

THE TAIWANESES games community has taken the first steps in building a closer relationship with European publishers, with two events lined up to promote co-operation between the two parties.

Next Thursday (February 10th) the Business Meeting and Matchmaking event in Paris takes place, co-sponsored by French multimedia outfit CFME-ACTIM.

This event will be followed by a second get-together during Milia 2000 in Cannes later this month.

A cocktail party is scheduled to take place on February 16th, with a number of leading Taiwanese companies attending, including multimedia expert Caliber and specialist image software developer Dance and Jump.

For further details call the organisers on 00331 4266 0562.

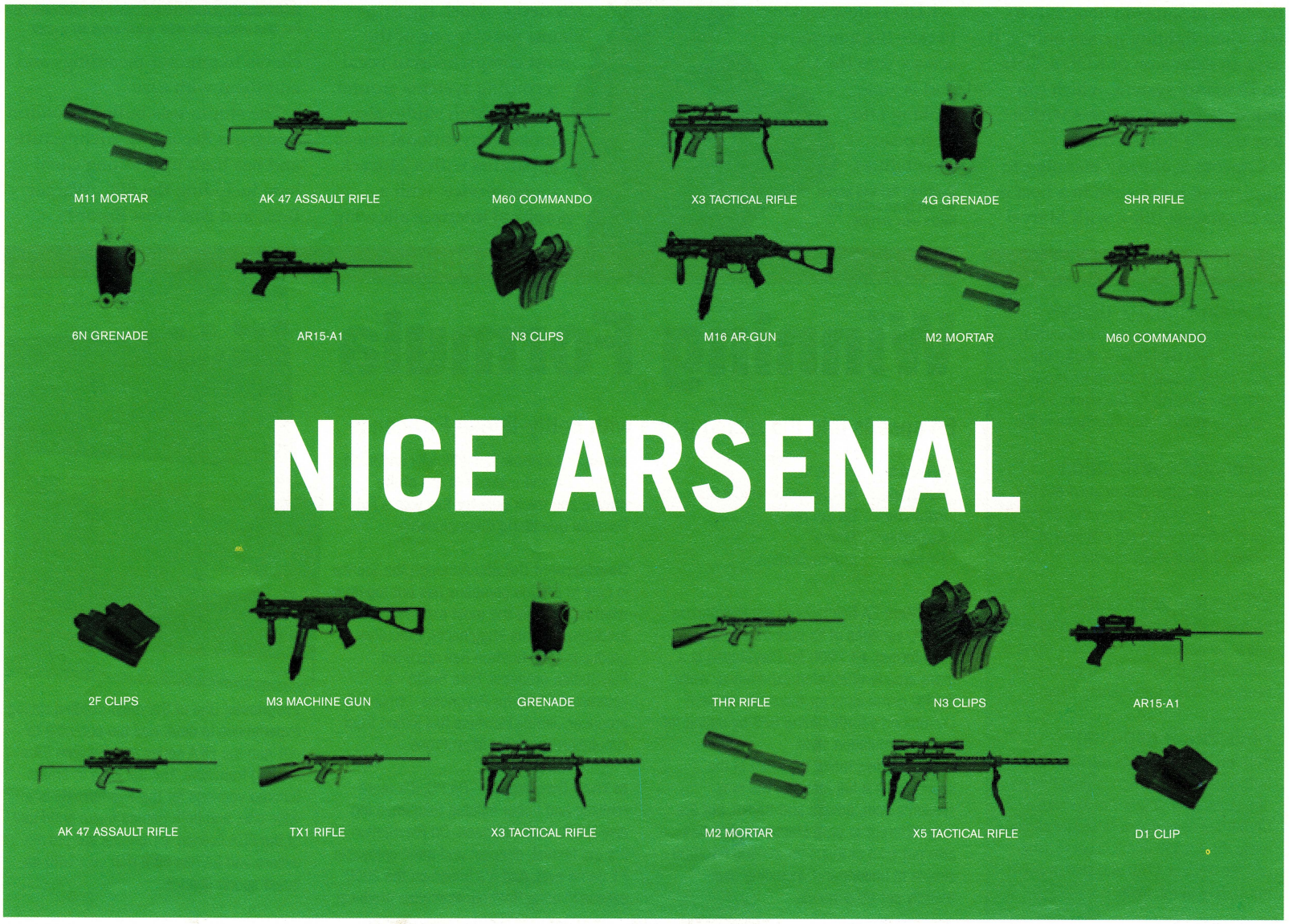
More online moves for Sega

SEGA has strengthened its online strategy in Japan, having signed alliances with some 30 cable TV companies.

The games giant is beginning tests with 30 domestic TV companies from this week and will provide some 2,000 Dreamcast console games to cable TV subscribers during the trial period, giving users access to a number of Internet-based services.

Jupiter Telecommunications and Titus Communications, two of Japan's largest cable companies, are part of the new alliance. The 30 firms involved in the trial will cover 7m households, or 70 per cent of Japan's cable TV audience.

Meanwhile, Square has teamed up with telecommunications giant Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation to provide online game software.



Wide boys to take on major studios

Small is beautiful claims new Brighton development outfit, as it readies itself for the challenge of the next-generation formats

A NEW start-up studio has emerged, established by six former members of the Simis team.

Wide Games is a new Brighton-based outfit and comprises a strong cross section of artists, developers, project managers and sound experts. "Basically, it's a ready-made team," offers executive producer Carl Jones.

"We're aware just how hard it is to get going, though," he concedes. "Too many teams go it alone and just hope everything goes well. These days, however, you need a game deal to get going so we're very aware of the possibility of failure."

Jones claims the time was right to quit Simis and is now looking forward to a new challenge.

The Wide Games team has emerged from former members of Simis, with From A to B the studio's first offering

The team left Simis in September last year and is only now ready to start, thanks to venture capitalist backing in return for a slice of future profits.

"We have been given enough money to fund a year's development," Jones continues. "Thankfully, we have the ready-made Atlas engine which can be used on any system."

The team is now talking to publishers about its first title, a driving game provisionally entitled From A to B to.

"It's a real move away from the sort of games like Ka-52 and Team Apache that we wrote for Simis," Jones enthuses.

"It's perfect post-pub fare. The game's wide open for many opportunities and there's real elements of fun to be had as players chase for the one remaining car or ride a bike down a narrow alley."

The game also shows off the team's Atlas engine to a tee. During the course of the game market stalls can be rammed or objects knocked over, with the engine handling everything in real-time. Indeed, Jones feels Atlas could hold the key to Wide Games' success.

"It proves that small teams can compete with the bigger studios," he says. "People may say that machines like the PlayStation 2 need 50 people on a game; we'll prove that if the development time is put in, that's not really necessary."

KDD takes fight online

JAPANESE telecommunications giant KDD has launched a high-speed Internet service dedicated to the fighting game genre.

The new 'Matching Service' system has been designed to allow the likes of Capcom and SNK to take their fighting games online. It uses an extension of KDD's 'Data on Demand' system, which can link data from two users within less than 70 milliseconds.

Capcom is already planning to implement the system in a host of its Dreamcast titles, with Marvel Vs Capcom 2, PowerStone 2 and SNK Vs Capcom the first titles to benefit. KDD has also kept the system remarkably affordable, with a five-minute bout costing between Y55-65.

KDD is now looking to take the innovative service into the US and is also looking into European possibilities.

Capcom's fighting games are set to go online via KDD's new service

Fat Man sounds off

A NEW voice-over specialist has opened a studio in the Midlands and is carving a niche in the video games sound market.

The Fat Man Studio is designed around two digital Yamaha O2R desks, which the firm claims provide one of the most comprehensive vocal recording systems around.

The Fat Man studio also mixes conventional music apparatus with a 24-track digital service, with a graphical interface allowing clients to monitor recordings and edit them with ease.

Fat Man emerges to offer voice-overs for games

The studio was built by London designers Recording Architecture and has built up a strong client base including the BBC, Warner Bros. and East West Records.

Production Line

Dragon Quest 7 delays

Enix has delayed its troubled Dragon Quest 7 RPG until May. It marks the third delay in just a month for the title, with Enix missing its December and February slots for the PlayStation epic.

Talonsoft clarification

Take 2 Interactive has pointed out that the five members to leave the Talonsoft team recently were not involved in the Hidden & Dangerous project.

EA Bonds with Quake

EA has licensed id's Quake III engine for use in its James Bond title, The World is Not Enough. It will also use the engine in several other forthcoming titles.

Blair Witch exposed

GoD has announced its plans for the forthcoming Blair Witch Project trilogy of games. Blair Witch: The Nocturne Chronicles uses GoD's Nocturne engine, while the second game is set in 1886 and the third in 1785 and sketch out the history of the myth.

In The Studio

Winning Formula

EA speeds into the racing genre with hottly-tipped F1 licence

Product: F1 2000
Developer: Image Space/Visual Science
Publisher: EA Sports
Available: March
Formats: PC/PlayStation

The Pitch: EA has tailored the PlayStation and PC versions of its new franchise to each format. F1 2000 for PlayStation is a more arcade-orientated experience, while the PC game aims for the scalp of Geoff Crammond's forthcoming GP3 by opting for a more simulation style.

Both games make the most of the licence with a full roster of the new season's cars, drivers and tracks, but are very different to play. Electronic Arts has also put a lot of focus on making F1 2000 simple to understand, including user-friendly set-up screens.

Brand or Licence: It is officially endorsed by the FOA and makes full use of the drivers and track data for this year's FIA Formula One World Championship.

Development Details: Although the licence is new to EA, the company has put together what is arguably the most experienced F1 production teams imaginable. Executive producer John Rostron has recruited PlayStation producer, Pete Smith - a veteran of F1 97 for Psygnosis - while PC producer, James Hawkins has joined from simulation specialist MicroProse.

In Their Own Words: "On PC, it's more realistic and better looking than anything else that's been released. On PlayStation, it's the fastest, deepest and most enjoyable F1 game ever. And it's based on the 2000 season?" John Rostron, executive producer.

Prognosis: One of the most exciting racing experiences to date. Has the potential to out-gun the FIFA series and become EA's leading franchise. The decision to create tailored versions for the two formats is a wise one, and both games make good use of the FOA licence. F1 games are proven sellers and EA has hit a rich vein with its latest sports licence.

Code Warrior

First Impressions

Nowadays, it's simply not enough to just dazzle your audience, says Owain Bennallack. You've got to impress them too. And much more than you would imagine...

SO I SIT my friend Tim down in front of Ready 2 Rumble and prepare to bask in the reflected glory of Sega's console. "You'll be amazed," I say.

But he's not impressed. "You've got a polygon problem there. That's rubbish!" he exclaims when he sees a boxer's curving pectorals cut off abruptly where they meet the body. Never mind that he's never seen this many polygons in a game before.

Amazing people is tricky; it's also what every developer wants to do. But impressing people is even harder. Ready 2 Rumble looks, to everyone but Tim at least, amazing. Its graphics told me that the 128-bit era had arrived, and to my eyes they remain more amazing than Soul Calibur's for their idiosyncrasy.

But Soul Calibur is far more impressive. Even as Ready 2 Rumble's wit and kooky hairstyles are beginning to wilt - leaving just a fairly limited fighting game - Soul Calibur opens up like so many Russian dolls. Indeed, most of this game's utter brilliance is invisible when you first charge at your opponent waving an axe.

Some impressive games are actually never amazing at all. I'm thinking of titles like Westwood's Command & Conquer, Squaresoft's Final Fantasy VII and MicroProse's Civilization. You may never go 'wow' at the aesthetics, but you just can't sleep for playing or thinking about them.

And a new one in the same vein is The Sims from Maxis, which arrives via Electronic Arts this week.

Amazing people is tricky; it's also what every developer wants to do. But impressing people is even harder. Ready 2 Rumble told me the 128-bit era had arrived.

Here you build houses and tend families. The concept sounds like Theme Housing Estate and, sure enough, you soon find the man at number three has a problem with his oven, which he's letting you know about via a Theme Park style speech bubble. Yep, been here, done that, you think to yourself.

Give it time, though, and The Sims proves fantastic fun - and deeply impressive. It doesn't boost a fully zoomable 3D camera or gunfights in suburbia, but it does have distinctly more-ish animations, evolving and engaging A-life protagonists, great path-finding AI and a sure understanding of how an enthusiast games-player thinks.

At the same time, it doesn't have a big name music licence but it does have plaintive, real-time music and weirdly emotive burbling conversations. It doesn't simulate an entire suburb complete with thousands of citizens doing absolutely nothing, but it does make you believe a mother is arguing with her daughter before sending her to bed.

Indeed, everything that's brilliant about The Sims would be hard to sell on a box. And that's pretty impressive.

Developers nowadays are asked to do it all. Publishers demand triple-A product, but they can still offer little more than shouting about graphics when it comes to actually selling products, which leaves developers in a bind.

For when everything is beautiful, the attraction lies elsewhere. If you were in LA for E3 this year, you'll have noticed all the eye-poppingly beautiful people serving you hamburgers and filling up your gas tank.

More evidence in London last week at the ATEI coin-op show. Arcade games are all about amazing people enough in just an instant to get them to put their coins in. Anyone who dragged themselves to ATEI saw just how old such a concept now looks.

Owain Bennallack
Owain.bennallack@virgin.net

ARMY MEN

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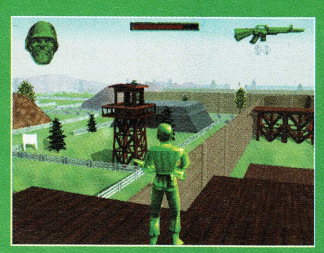

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3DO

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TO PLAY, BUT INSANELY
TRATING FOR FOOTIE
LATION FANS
UPPERS
Looks fantastic • Excellent goal ranking system • Can save replays • Matches are always exciting
DOWNERS
Too much computer assistance • Poor artificial intelligence • Some dodgy rules • Weak with one player
7
dialogues are well-written and cleverly handled, and you're offered enough options when talking to them that the 'right' question or answer isn't always immediately obvious. True, the second or third time you play the game, you know what to say to get your experience points, although you're still never quite sure whether any particular
Without a doubt, this is the best true role-playing game on PC to date. Its level of complexity and intelligent plot knocks Baldur's Gate into oblivion and gives RPG fans a real taste of what PC games could really deliver in the coming year or two. In terms of sheer depth, intelligence and atmosphere, Torment is state-of-the-role-playing-art.
ALSO CONSIDER
BALDUR'S GATE (Interplay, £34.99) Already an RPG classic, Baldur's Gate is a mammoth hack-and-slash adventure that uses the D&D system and supports multiple characters. PCZ #73, 85%
DIABLO (Blizzard, £9.99) An earlier hack-and-slash RPG, but one with a multiplayer element and fantastic non-stop action. PCZ #48, 88%
PCZ VERDICT
UPPERS Atmospheric graphics • Well-designed interface • Chilling animations and clever dialogue
DOWNERS Slow load between screens • Single-player mode only • Unfamiliar fantasy setting
87 Being a zombie has never been this much fun
#86 PC ZONE 2000 91
SAID
F1 WORLD GRAND PRIX
"Truly mind-blowing. No near miss or fluffed opportunity, the N64 has finally got the driving game that it really deserves."
VERDICT
Until the sequel arrives, F1 WGP remains the pre-eminent Nintendo driving game.
5
June 1999 N64 63
taking money and possessions, f you try and steal from a you're liable to get into big he problems, however, are rgivable.
ame is shorter than Baldur's Gate, to a wealth of sub-quests and lved conversation choices, there y of value packed onto the four nake up the game. By the time rked out what's going on and ameless One is, you'll already how you'll approach it differently
JASON WESTON
Dragons...
...without the need for a 20 sided die
In a dark and engaging setting
Planescape: Torment is not:
Suitable for the squeamish
As combat-heavy as Baldur's Gate
About a halfling who needs to find a ring
PC GAMER
Another great addition to the genre, blending elements of Baldur's Gate and Fallout 2.
86%
FEBRUARY 2000 PC GAMER 93

MAGAZINES UNDER PRESSURE

With mainstream media exposure, creative in-store support and well known franchises more important than ever in the consumer software market, where exactly does the traditional specialist press fit in? Do high scores and covers make any difference these days? Mike Anderiesz investigates...

Just Who The Spec

AS OUR MARKET has matured, with its consumers as likely to read FHM, Maxim or NME as a specialist press monthly, there has been a clear shift in attitudes within the industry's marketing and PR departments.

Reviews just don't seem to be as important to software publishers as they once were. And in some cases the old sense of 'playing fair' has diminished as a result.

Future Publishing's PC Gamer has been one of the first to go public in its accusations against the software firms, with editor James Ashton blasting the software market in a recent editorial comment.

"An increasing number of games are arriving in the PC Gamer office on the day of release," he wrote. " While publishers cite the threat of early copy piracy as a reason for the changeover, we can't help but think that the marketers are losing respect for the public."

On the surface, there would seem to be nothing new about all this. Publishers have been holding back suspect games from prying journos ever since The Great Space Race in 1985.

> ***"Magazines have to realise that they no longer have a God-given right to review something before it ships. It's a process of growing up that the industry must go through.*** Vip Patel, Gauntlet

However, Ashton goes further, claiming that one leading player has declared a formal end to gold discs being sent to magazines. He reports that this company sends out only boxed copies three days before release, effectively breaking the news/preview/review cycle which has sustained the industry from the beginning.

Other magazines, while less vociferous in their protests, have also expressed concern at the dwindling amount of review copies arriving on their desks.

No publisher will admit to any underhand tactics, but several have confirmed to MCV that their way of dealing with the mags has changed in recent times.

"We may not always be able to give out pre-release software," says EA's UK marketing director Al King. "We are asking all the specialists to sign agreements which ties them into being more responsible. So far about 50 per cent have responded. For them it's very much business as usual."

Security is EA's motivation here. But maybe there is also a lack of interest from some firms. With the biggest titles now often sold on the strength of franchises, there has been a marked change in PR emphasis which few can deny.

Your Poison! Deadly Ivy comes well equipped and shes got a bendy sword!
The greatest fighting game ever made given the most perfect home conversion ever created. It's worth buying a Dreamcast just for this.
96%
If you like this...
Check out Virtua Fighter 3tb or Powerstone on DC or Soul Blade and Tekken 3 on PlayStation.
CHRISTMAS 1999
Games Master
65

As a games reviewer for two national newspapers, I am now besieged by PR interest from software companies who would have scoffed at a 100-word review in the past, regardless of my employer's circulation.

Needs ialist Press?

Publishers are now well aware that the majority of buyers do not read specialist magazines, and the added cost involved in reaching these people makes risking it all on a review a rather undesirable part of the marketing mix.

"Reviews are far from important these days," says HMV's console buyer Doug Bone. "There are titles consumers want regardless of how good they may be. Games like Tomorrow Never Dies are shifting incredible volumes despite being hammered in the specialists. A good review can still help, but a bad one needn't hurt."

Some of the smaller distributors and retailers go even further.

"Magazines have no God given right to review something before it ships," says Vip Patel, boss of Gauntlet Entertainment.

"When you put a name like Tomb Raider on a box, like Levi jeans, you don't need anyone's permission to market it and sell huge amounts. It's a process of growing up that the industry may simply have to go through."

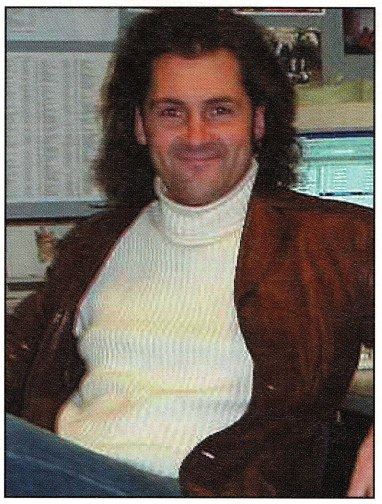
Even 12 months ago few would have been so bold as to express such views. The consequences of cutting off the specialists was simply too great a risk.

"The specialists are rightly shocked because they've never been treated like this before," says Peter Noble of his eponymous PR agency. "But publishers now see consumer and lifestyle as a vehicle for image. Once they only wanted coverage in the lads mags (Loaded, FHM), now they want younger audiences too (Just 17), other specialist vehicles (movies, sport) and even woman's magazines. They also want to build their corporate profiles in the broadsheets."

The specialist PR community is not convinced. "Publishers like to think that the business they're working in is more glamorous than it is," says Bastion's Ciaran Brennan. "The truth is that the sales of a good game like Half Life almost exactly matched the sales of the specialist mags minus duplication. The bread and butter work for our clients remains the specialist press. Only once you've taken care of that can you look at the mainstream consumer."

Cathy Campos, director of Panache PR and behind the spectacular pre-hype for Black & White, is also committed to the old formula. "You need good reviews for two reasons. Firstly, to get consumers to buy your game and, secondly, to get the retailers to stock it. A review of under 70 per cent in the specialists won't get you much shelf-space unless you've got tremendous muscle."

To explain this divergence of views, you have to examine the devaluation in the very currency of reviewing. Once, a high score was the only guaranteed way to sell a game, but even if reviews



> **"The fact is, we may not always be able to give out pre-release code."** Al King, Electronic Arts

are still as honest as ever (which in the vast majority of cases they are) highly optimistic previews now seem to be very much the order of the day.

"Previews are always secured well in advance of launch and are nearly always positive," agrees Brennan. "Sometimes, if we do our job properly, the last thing we need is a review score."

Hardly surprising, then, that MCV has trouble finding enough new releases with review scores to include in its weekly Pre-Sell section *(see page 25)*.

"The problem is that everybody is going mass market, looking for the four million PlayStation users who aren't buying games mags at the moment. There's a temptation to dumb-down and write happy-clappy stories," claims David Upchurch, joint launch editor of Playstation World.

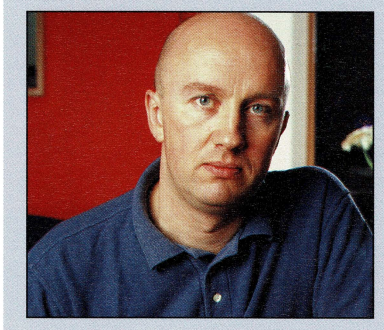
"But we did a lot of research with MORI and readers said that reviews are the most important thing for them."

Of course, the games press could withdraw preview coverage from those publishers who refuse to submit review code on time.

But whether any magazine's advertising department has the stomach for such a fight is surely questionable.

The Importance Of Reviews

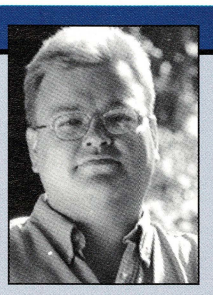
THE PR MAN'S VIEW



"The truth is that the sales of a good game like Half Life almost exactly matches the sales of the specialist mags, minus duplication. The bread and butter work for our clients remains the specialist press. Only once you've taken care of that can you look at the mainstream reader."
Ciaran Brennan, Bastion

THE RETAILER'S VIEW

"Reviews are far from important these days. A good review can still help, but a bad one needn't hurt."
Doug Bone, HMV



THE EDITOR'S VIEW

"We have done a lot of market research with MORI and readers responded overwhelmingly that reviews were the most important thing for them."
David Upchurch, PlayStation World

PC Gamer and PC Zone have both recently criticised the 'softening' of the specialist press that has been forced by software makers

THE WORD IS ON THE STREET...

From February 11th we will be available in the London area at these newsagents.

Every Friday

Bazdar London W1R 8TR Williams 62 Tottenham Court Road London W1 9RH News Plus 23 Whitcomb Street London WC2H 7HA Good News 23 Berwick Street London W1V 3RF M.V. News 73 Beak Street London W1R 3LF Capital News 48 Old Compton Street London W1V 5PB Capital News 17 Marylebone High Street London W1M 3PB Grays Inn News 50 Theobold Road London WC1X 8NW Wardour News 118 Wardour Street London W1V 3LA Fulham News 200 Fulham Road London SW10 9PN Camden News 227 Camden High Street London NW1 7BU Capital News 306 Edgware Road London W2 1DY Magnum 17 Thayer Street London W1 5LD Selfridges Receiving Depot W1 2LR Capital News 33 Queensway London W2 4QJ Leadenhall Market London EC3V 1LT Michael O'Brien's Newsstand Temple Tube London WC2 3PH Tony's Newsstand Argyll Great Marlborough Street London W1A 3AB Goodge Street News 49 Goodge Street London W1P 1FB Patkins 28 Rathbone Place London W1P 1BJ Moronis 68 Old Compton Street London W1V 5PA Botterills 308 Regent Street London W1R 5AL Marshall News 11 Marshall Street London W1V 1LP Lauries 66 Charlotte Street London W1P 1LR Rippons 88 Dean Street London W1V 5AA Newsmart 30-35 Drury Lane London WC2B 5RH Capital News 115 Tottenham Court Road London W1 9HL Kingly News 10 Kingly Street London W1R 5LF Holland Park News 134 Holland Park Road 134 Holland Park Avenue London W11 4UE Drury News 15 Drury Lane London WC2 5RB Liberty News 42 Brewer Street London W1R 3HP Ox News via Newman St. Back Entrance Boots London W1N 9FD Chancery Lane News Hall Tube Station London WC1 6DR Shreeji 6 Chiltern Street London W1M 1PA O'Regan News Victoria St. Thames News 999 Thames Road Dartford DA1 4QE Portman 32a Greville Street London EC1N 8TB Rayden News Kiosk Bond Street Station London W1 2DB Newsmart (Harewood) 7 Harewood Place London W1R 9HA Rathbone News 55 Rathbone Place London W1P 3HB Fables News 55 The Broadway London SW1A 2BJ Nelhart Ltd. 128 Aldersgate Street London EC1 A4JQ Moffats 1 Lansdown Row London W1X 7LL Plus News 28 Shepherds Market London W1Y 7HQ Fourways 240 Grays Inn Road London WC1X 8JR Golden Hinde Ltd. St. Mary Overie Dock London SE1 9DG

***MCV** already reaches over 9,200 desks every week. Now we are going on sale through especially targeted London newsagents to gain access to even more people with a professional interest in interactive entertainment – from students looking for career opportunities in the business to media, marketing and financial personnel who want to be regularly informed.*

MCV The Market for Home Computing & Video Games

*For a copy of our media pack contact **Alex Jarvis** on 01992 535647 or email alex.jarvis@mcvuk.com*

More serving suggestions

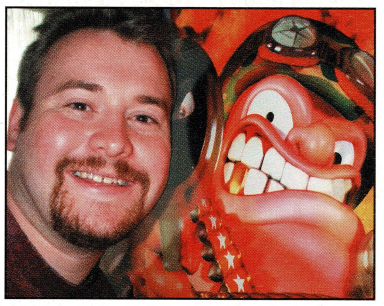
I READ with great interest Owain Benallack's calls to the software development community for more original product (Codewarrior Column - MCV 21/1).

I think it goes without saying that the whims, desires and ambition of the majority of developers is to create high quality, original games to the best of their ability.

So where's the problem? Well, in our own considerable experience as an independent, mid-sized developer, the publishing climate is such that the majority of major publishers just aren't interested in original products any more.

They want sure-fire success, so that means a comfortable genre, or more importantly a brand, licence or franchise...and they want something they can understand and pigeon-hole.

Generally, this gives most developers (certainly smaller



Publishers are driving 'safe' software development

ones) something of a dilemma when they require substantial funding to actually create the thing in the first place. Do they go for broke (and 99 times out of 100, end up that way) or play it safe and continue feeding the babies and clothing the wife?

I think the only developers who can hand-on-heart work on truly original products are those who can afford to (the most notable example being Lionhead with its Black and White project - and fair play to Mr. Molyneux).

It disturbs me that whatever we serve up on our 'suggested entrée' menus to prospective publishers, they almost always go for another helping of bacon and eggs, since they know what it is and it's generally cooked quite quickly. Why risk a more exotic dish?

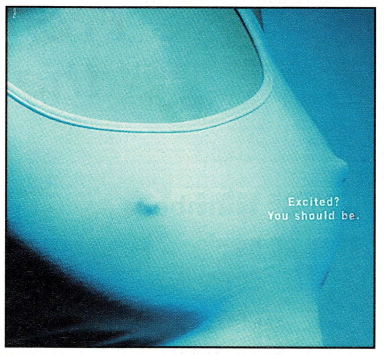
There's nothing wrong with bacon and eggs (and I'm not trying to reduce the UK dev scene to a menu from a roadside café), but I would ask that publishers widen their palettes a little.

Owain noted three pioneering titles in Tomb Raider, Hidden & Dangerous and Driver. All of them have sequels planned (Lara's bits wobbling for a fifth time, no less)...bacon and eggs anyone?

I guess that's the danger of producing original titles in the first place, but that's another story.

Martyn Brown,
Development Director, Team 17, Leeds

Is this advert just witless onanism?



We had to look up what onanism means...so will you

I FIND IT HARD to believe that you can justify the inclusion of the crass Synsys.com 'nipple' ads in your otherwise excellent weekly.

Synsys may well be proud of their growing reputation for witless onanism, but it seems that they have spent far too much time in fetid bedrooms to notice that in the real world, it's actually no longer the 1960s.

Matthew Burgess,
Deputy Editor, ITNETWORK.COM

Online is a challenge for all

I WAS DISAPPOINTED to read the gloomy title given to the recent story about our company (MCV - 21/1). The next few years are going to be very exciting. My views on the next 10-15 years are not unique. Just look at what's been going on between Warner, EMI and AOL recently.

I built Pink Planet up from £500 to a business turning over more than £4 million. I did this by closely watching future trends and preparing for changes whether we as retailers liked them or not. The only question is how much market share online/e-tailing/downloading will take from traditional retail and when.

GATTIKER: High Street retail must think ahead

I think it will be considerable, due to e-distribution cost savings and the comfort of our customers when using the technology.

None of us in retail want to see a bleak future, that's why we must look ahead now by diversifying, finding unique selling points, niche markets and making ourselves more flexible in our market positioning.

It's easier to start analysing and steering our businesses now than burying our heads in the sand and then being overtaken by change unexpectedly.

We retailers owe it to ourselves and to our staff to prepare for these forthcoming changes even if our opinions on their impact vary. It is those who cannot accept and prepare for what may happen who will end up gloomy.

Jason Gattiker
Pink Planet, Waltham Abbey

It's not such a Virgin territory

So Stephen Lynn reckons that EB is borrowing Virgin's 'exploding stuff' designs (MCV Mail 21/1).

Well, when I saw this campaign in my local Megastore, I assumed it was part of a promo for indie record label Blast First, who have been using the roadsign logo on their releases by Sonic Youth, Sun Ra and Acid Brass for years now.

Never mind Stephen's advice to EB. If anyone at Virgin is stuck for an idea for their next marketing campaign, why don't they just nick some off the covers of CDs?

Presumably they've got a lot of them hanging around.

Dave Green, *Radio 5*

A heartfelt thanks

I WOULD LIKE to take this opportunity to thank all my friends in the games industry. You recently helped to make a good Christmas 1999 absolutely great.

On behalf of the Yorkhill Children's Hospital, I must pour out my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to my appeal at Christmas for games and POS materials for the children who had to spend the festive season in hospital.

This year's appeal proved to be successful beyond belief and without your collective help it would not have been possible.

It is not often that you hear the good side of this business but it simply has to be pointed out that you MCV readers were magic!

The total value raised was in excess of £10,000.

John Hanvidge,
Video Library Manager, National Savings Glasgow

Foreign student available

I AM AN International Business Administration student at the European Business School near Frankfurt, Germany where I am studying on Marketing and Information Technology.

The course also focuses on language and management skills and provides a grounding in management principles. Right now I am studying abroad at the DePaul University in Chicago where I am participating in MBA classes covering subjects such as international marketing and e-commerce. My last semester was spent at the ESC Dijon in France.

As the course underlines the importance of experience, I would appreciate the chance to spend time in a games-focused company.

I speak three languages and can offer a comprehensive knowledge of the German market. Any firm that would like to have further info can contact me via email at: dirklinzbach@hotmail.com

Dirk Linzbach

Kicking up a stink

IT IS FAIR to say that, in generations gone by, namely of the 8-bit and 16-bit variety, we have witnessed boom and bust cycles fuelled by a lack of quality product, hardware price erosion and tabloid stories created by some dubious source.

Last week, whilst carrying out my Saturday job with Sky Television, I found myself having to defend the games industry against a pack of football journalists (broadcast, tabloid and broadsheet). They seemed to think that the games industry had once again fallen on hard times because the Eidos share price had taken a battering.

The ironic fact about this incident was that many of the football journalists had in the previous 24 hours covered the 'death of Subbuteo' story where, judging by much of the coverage, computer games had largely been responsible for the demise of the once popular 'flick to kick' hobby.

The games industry had clearly won the competition but the PR winner was Hasbro's Subbuteo.

I took great pride in explaining to the sporting press what I considered to be a reasonable answer on behalf of our industry, that not all good games sell in huge numbers and that there are always going to be big money titles which fail to live up to expectations, just like footballers. Chris Sutton anyone?

I then went on to tell the story of the games industry's victory over Subbuteo, how Tomb Raider 4 and Champ Manager have sold very well. How the new Dreamcast has been met by huge demand and that PS2 is just around the corner.

The response from the assembly of news hounds around me? A generally collective 'I suppose you might be right'. Still, all in an afternoon's work...

Jonathan Beales
Creative Media,Ipswich

MCV Forward Planner

Even our rival has recently admitted that MCV is the undisputed market leader for all sectors of the interactive entertainment industry sector. But whilst it may clone our style, it cannot get close to our circulation (in excess of 9,200) or our editorial quality. For news of upcoming special features and promotions, read on...

Issue 72 Friday February 11th **Milia 2000 Show Edition**
Showfloor Distribution **Total Circulation 13,000+**

As the industry prepares to jet off to Cannes for Milia, MCV provides an exhaustive and informed show edition. Some 4,000 copies of this issue will be distributed from the showfloor and our booth (R13.26). To boost your trade marketing at this year's Milia event, contact Alex.Jarvis@mcvuk.com or call 01992 535647.

Issue 73 Friday February 18th **Milia 2000 Review**
MCV's Milia News Team will be putting together a comprehensive editorial and pictorial report on Europe's premier interactive content exhibition and conference.

Issue 74 Friday February 25th **Official ABC Guide**
MCV provides a comprehensive round-up of the specialist consumer magazines covering the home computing and video games market in the UK.

Plus **Manufacturing and Fulfilment Services**
MCV looks at the latest developments from the major players in this often ignored, but vital sector of the market. For further information on marketing your services in this essential guide, contact Alex.Jarvis@mcvuk.com or call 01992 535647.

Issue 75 Friday March 3rd **Profit Builder: PC Graphics & Sound Cards**
To help boost retail profits from this always important sector, MCV takes a look at the sector featuring firms such as Creative Labs, 3DFX, Yamaha, Orchid, ATI and Guillemot

Plus **British Software Development Special**
Extra Distribution at Games Developer Conference, San Jose, California
MCV is the trade publication with the biggest development reader base and the most influential stories, columns and analysis. We will be using the hugely important GDC event to help promote the UK software development market in the US.

Advertising ☎ 01992 535647
Editorial ☎ 01992 535646

Consumer Watch is a weekly analysis of consumer buying intentions exclusive to MCV. In association with Games Domain, we ask the public which software releases they intend to purchase over the next month. We also print the results of a topical question each week, too. It's clearly a part of our market-leading publication that no one employed in retailing or marketing can afford to miss...

Q **Which two current or future software releases are you intending to purchase over the next month?**

This Week	Last Week	Title	1st Choice	2nd Choice	Total Score
1	4	Gran Turismo 2	68	31	167
2	1	Tomb Raider 4	37	45	119
3	7	Final Fantasy VIII	33	43	109
4	2	Quake 3 Arena	41	25	107
5	6	Diablo 2	39	19	97
6	13	Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	30	25	85
7	5	Resident Evil 3	22	26	70
8	11	Age of Empires 2	27	12	66
9	-	Crazy Taxi	29	6	64
10	-	Shenmue	23	3	49
11	-	Donkey Kong Country 64	13	12	38
12	17	Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	13	11	37
13	-	The Sims	13	11	37
14	15	Army Men	11	15	37
15	10	Unreal Tournament	8	19	35
16	-	Soldier Of Fortune	15	5	35
17	-	Planescape: Torment	14	6	34
18	16	Madden NFL 2000	15	4	34
19	9	Half Life: Opposing Forces	9	16	34
20	8	Tomorrow Never Dies	10	13	33

Total number of consumers who voted: **995**
Voting took place between: **Sat January 22nd & Fri January 28th**
Scoring System: *Two points for every consumer voting a title as his/her first choice purchase, one point for every second choice*

Q **If your local supermarket stocked games products, do you think you would end up buying more?**
Yes: 72%
No: 28%

Analysis

Hardcore fans target Sega and PC

AFTER its surprising dip in last week's chart, Gran Turismo 2 returns to its rightful place at the top of the Most Wanted list in consumerland. But it's certainly not the PlayStation format that is dominating this chart right now.

Given that the kind of consumers who will regularly check out Games Domain and then go on to complete the ConsumerWatch survey (just under 1,000 this week) will be keen gamers rather than casual shoppers, it is perhaps unsurprising that Dreamcast titles and PC releases find it easier to perform well.

Despite GT2, Sony's PlayStation format is not dominating would-be game buyers thoughts.

Crazy Taxi and Shenmue are eagerly awaited by Sega owners desperate for something new (a fact which surely helps to explain Tomb Raider 4's continued good showing here when other Xmas releases have waned).

Maxis/EA's The Sims, due next Friday, pops in this week at number 13 as its PR and marketing takes effect, but at trade level awareness is lower than it should be. Other PC titles, such as the brilliant Soldier Of Fortune from Activision/Raven (number 16, due in March) also makes an entrance and Interplay's Planescape: Torment (already out) returns.

Lastly, our question about supermarkets will give massive encouragement to chains such as Tesco, which are ramping up their commitment to the games sector (as reported in MCV last week), and distributors like Cork, which specialise in successfully taking software to new types of retail outlet.

It should also encourage suppliers, as must any piece of information that shows punters saying: "Yes, we would buy more."

Stuart Dinsey

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ConsumerWatch is published by MCV in association with Games Domain. For more information about Games Domain contact Nick DiCesare (sales@gamesdomain.com) or Richard Sutcliffe (rs@gamesdomain.com). Tel: 0121 326 0900

Newswire

Fear Factory rocks Messiah

Los Angeles heavy metal band Fear Factory has provided the soundtrack for Interplay's PC big hope Messiah. Shiny's innovative game of possession will feature a number of titles from the Fear Factory back catalogue, including Zero Signal, New Breed, Hunter-Killer and Crash Test. The group has also provided the game's title track, which can be downloaded as an MP3 track from Interplay's www.messiah.com site.

Bastion plays Sports

Popular PR agency Bastion has been appointed to handle the public relations for Championship Manager developer Sports Interactive. Bastion will look to raise the profile of the Islington studio.

Paragon launches Mac mag

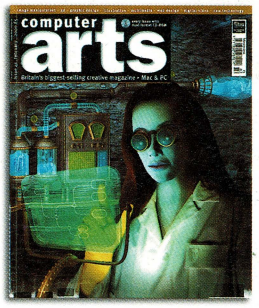
Paragon has introduced an Apple-biased sister magazine to its PC Made Easy title. Mac Made Easy is a quarterly publication and has been launched to capitalise on the growing success of the iMac range, offering easy-to-follow advice on the Internet, setting up software and reviews of new utilities. It goes on sale today (February 4th).

GameCampaign rolls out

A new service offering publishers a complete guide to the online coverage of their titles has been launched. FYI's GameCampaign locates any relevant data and further updates. Interested parties should call 01225 442600.

Media Choice: Computer Arts

Publisher: Future
Tel: 01225 442244
Price: £5
Pages: 124
Advertising: 17%



Giveaway: Cover-mounted CD containing the complete trueSpace 3/SE package and demos of forthcoming titles. Movies of leading animation work is also included

Content: A complete guide to graphics and design packages. Includes walk-throughs of key titles, alongside reviews of current packages and interviews with leading graphics specialists

Features: Advanced guide to mastering 3D techniques; interview with leading illustrator Derek Lea; behind the scenes at leading animation studio Smoke and Mirrors; colour calibration kit round-up

Reviews: Dreamweaver 3, Maya 2.5, Houdini 4, KPT 6, QuarkXpress 4.1, MatchMover, SignPoster 3, Canvas 7, KPT Vector Effects 1.5, 1Mac DV

Rate Card: Full Page: £2,565 DPS: £4,275
Editor: Josse Bilson
Advertising: Rob Bennett

Sitewatch

Guillemot

www.guillemot.co.uk

The Guillemot site boasts details of the firm's many ranges, but is in need of a make over. Guillemot has done itself few favours with a drab site and a limited use of pictures. Despite a varied catalogue of 3D cards, controllers and speakers, the site makes the world of peripherals look rather dull. Which MCV is assured it's not. No, really.

Rating 3/5

Up Close & Personal: Garry Williams, MD, Sold Out

What was your first job in the industry?
Advertising executive on Emap's Educational Computing title.

Most important lesson learned?
The boys playing games on the other titles were having more fun. That and teachers tended to throw less launch parties.

You were on Emap's games magazines for years. Funniest moments?
A Jimmy Krankie lookalike called Nigel Taylor seems to remember more than me, but I did tell members of the Emap board that their Armani suits contributed more to the company than they did.

You went to Imagineer after that...
The idea of a Japanese boss 10,000 miles away seemed heaven sent. We brought the first N64 titles to Europe, with Rage we signed the first third-party Dreamcast deal outside Japan and followed it with the first PlayStation 2 and Game Boy Advance titles.

What prompted the formation of the Sold Out budget label?
Three people told me it couldn't be done. Sadly, the 'dare you' mentality always proved irresistible to me. Sold Out is one example, diving into a freezing swimming pool at an industry do and drinking from optics have been less successful ones.

Predictions for the coming year?
The big will get bigger. It won't be about publishing games, but more about end of quarters. Then, when they dump their companies on other big honkers with cash to burn, we may get back to producing fun games the public enjoy and buy.

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Smiths picks Kibble, Gameplay adds Bartle

... plus Hurley joins Saitek, Pitt-Stanley quits Columbus for Activision, MCV hires new man and Gatehouse joins Lost Boys Games

With a move into limited news-stand distribution announced this week and other new ventures due to be revealed shortly, MCV Media UK has continued its current expansion with the appointment of **CHRIS BUCKLEY** as senior sales executive. Buckley joins from the leading arcade trade title AB Europe, published by Centaur (the makers of Marketing Week). He will report directly to the sales director **ALEX JARVIS** and joins the MCV team on Monday (February 7th).

RACHAEL HURLEY has joined peripherals firm Saitek as marketing executive. Hurley was previously European PR executive at MicroProse.

Gameplay has appointed **DR RICHARD BARTLE** to head up its games design team. Bartle was co-creator or the first online multiplay game MUD. "I am delighted that Richard has decided to join us," said Gameplay.com's chief operating officer Colin Duffy. "He is the father of online gaming."

Activision has hired **RALPH PITT-STANLEY** as its UK national accounts manager. Pitt-Stanley was previously boss of PlayStation software rental distributor CMD.

DAVE BAYLISS, formerly UK managing director of Blue Byte, has returned to the German games publisher to act as a consultant in the UK.

Former PR executive at Project 2 Interactive **NANCY GATEHOUSE** has joined Amsterdam development studio Lost Boys Games. She will initially take a dual role as both office manager and PR manager, concentrating on press relations as the studio develops. Lost Boys Games is a division of Dutch publisher Lost Boys.

US studio Rogue Entertainment has promoted **BARRETT ALEXANDER** to CEO. He was formerly employed at rival developer id Software.

Buy.com UK Ltd, a joint venture between US online retailer buy.com Inc and UK-based eVentures, has appointed **MURRAY HENNESSY** as its CEO. A Harvard Business school graduate, Hennessy was previously vice president and general manager for Tricon Restaurant Services, responsible for Pizza Hut and KFC restaurants in some 28 countries.

WHSmith

GARY KIBBLE has joined WH Smith as senior multimedia software buyer. Kibble replaces **MARTYN GIBBS** who quit the firm to take the games manager's role at HMV. He has been at Smiths for five years, previously in a marketing role and as senior buyer for the video department. He will report to WH Smith's business director **JUDITH SWALES**.

Midway Games in the US has hired **DORIS F. LYNCH** as national sales manager. She has been the firm's regional sales manager for the past five years.

If you would like your company's appointments featured within our Industry Appointments page, simply email your details to **Lisa.Foster@mcvuk.com**. Alternatively, fax us on **01992 535648** or telephone the MCV Newsdesk directly with your information on **01992 535646**. Photos are particularly welcome.

Datascope
GAMES PEOPLE

Marketing Manager
£40 - £45k + bens; South
Great developer and publisher of top quality games are urgently seeking an experienced Marketing Manager due to continual growth and restructuring of the marketing department. You must have a minimum of 3 years + games experience and are a real team player. Ideally you will have had an international focus and lots of initiative. Growing department so your managerial skills must be proven.

PR Manager
£35k - £40k; London
You must have at least 3 years experience gained within the industry and knowledge of the new media industry. You will hold responsibility for all in house PR, management of external trade & financial PR and overall development of PR within the company. You must have a network of national contacts that will enable you to push the company to the forefront. Fun company which offers excellent prospects and progression.

European PR Manager
£35 - 40k; South
European PR experience gained within the games industry is a must to take on this position with one of the market leaders. You must be educated to degree level and be a strong team player with the ability to see projects through from beginning to end.

UK Sales Manager
£35k OTE £45k; London
A great opportunity for a sales professional with experience handling multiple accounts to work for an exciting London-based games company. The ideal candidate will have worked in the games industry before, and have a proven track record of successful account management. You should be a determined and confident individual with the drive to help this company develop and grow.

Sales Administrator
£17-18k; London
An enthusiastic gamer is needed to assist the sales manager of a successful games company with various national accounts. You should be a lively and hard-working person as you will be dealing with customers, processing orders and liasing with clients. You should be computer literate and ready to prove your skills, as you will move to a National Account role eventually.

Sales Director
£40k + car OTE £50k; South
The main responsibility of this senior role will be to manage a sales team in order to effectively develop the UK sales channels for this company that specialises in the translation and localisation of various games titles. In order to be a successful candidate, you must have previous sales experience in the games industry as well as good negotiation and presentation skills.

4x Product Manager's
£25 - £27.5k + bens; South
Variety of positions available for experienced Product Managers with at least 2/3 years industry experience. With products ranging from children's entertainment to Formula 1 and Superbikes there is a product to suit everyone. All positions offer the scope to progress and develop.

3x Marketing Assistants
£18 - £20k + bonus + bens; South
Ideal opportunity to take on a bit more responsibility and use your minimum of 6 months marketing experience ideally gained within games or the entertainment industry. You must be a team player who can work well on your own as well as part of the team, great opportunity to establish yourself and learn more.

Please contact **Malsara** for sales or **D** for marketing

DATASCOPE RECRUITMENT

Datascope Recruitment
104 Great Portland Street, London, W1N 5PE
Tel: 0171-580 6018 Fax: 0171-580 6068
E-mail: matt@datascope.co.uk

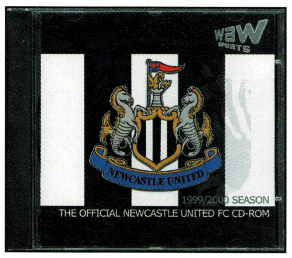
This is just a small selection. For hundreds more please visit: **www.datascope.co.uk**

HOME

This week Matt Camp looks at Mattel's latest educational offering, along with Koch Distribution's directory package UK-Info, WAW's CD-ROM tribute to the Toon Army and Faces, a new mugshot-maker kit from Computer Bookshops...

Newcastle United FC

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Where and When Sports**
Tel: **0870 241 1754**
Price: **£29.99**



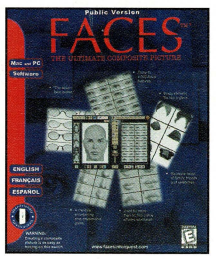
PERFECT for football fanatics, this latest CD-ROM from WAW Sports focuses on the Newcastle team, giving supporters everything they need to know about their favourite team.

Features include updateable results and fixtures, a desktop countdown clock for the next Big Game and an interactive video tour of the home ground. There's also specially filmed footage of players and coaching staff. In addition, users with Internet connection can receive regular updates from WAW Sports' own excellent website.

A good title in an increasingly popular genre. Expect more titles based on Premiership Clubs.

Faces

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Computer Bookshops**
Tel: **0121 778 3333**
Price: **£29.99**



FACES is a composite-picture program that enables the user to create mug-shot style portraits.

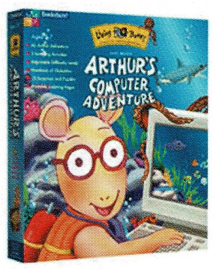
There are over 4,000 facial features that can be dragged and dropped onto the canvas. Cleverly, a specially designed neutral skin-tone is used so that all nationalities and face-types can be represented.

When a face has been created, the software generates a unique 'DNA-style' code that can be emailed to another owner of the disc to recreate the face.

This powerful piece of software is apparently already being used by many police forces in the US but the entertainment value of this title is quite obvious, too.

Arthur's Adventure

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Mattel Interactive**
Tel: **01293 651714**
Price: **£19.99**



ARTHUR'S Computer Adventure is designed to help children develop their computer skills and brush up on the three R's.

The title features all the characters from the US cartoon series and the adventure plays very much like an interactive TV episode to keep kids interested.

Arthur and his mate Buster crash his mother's PC and it's up to the young player to help them mend it using various skills in maths, reading, vocabulary and computer-literacy.

Attractive cartoon-style graphics and a simple interface help to make this another high-quality product from Mattel.

Nice one.

UK-Info Disk

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Koch Distribution**
Tel: **01256 707767**
Price: **£39.95**

UK INFO-DISK has been relaunched by Koch Media and now includes Irish as well as UK contact details.

The CD-ROM contains telephone and address information for some 47 million residents and 1.5 million businesses.

The original UK Info-Disk launched amidst a blaze of controversy with many concerned that it could be used to invade people's privacy. It has since proven itself to be an invaluable piece of software for small offices.

This latest version allows a search to be made with the minimum criteria and supplies the user with specific locations on a detailed road map.

Release planner

An at-a-glance guide to new education, reference, lifestyle and utility PC titles on their way to retail...

BBC Multimedia

☎ **0181 222 1571**

Noddy (GBC)	February 17th

Computer Bookshops

☎ **0121 778 3333**

Encyclopedia for Smart Kids 1	February
Encyclopedia for Smart Kids 2	February
Rome: Crime, Passion and Power	March
Wonders of the Mind	March

Data Becker

☎ **01420 22707**

Music Centre Pro	February
Monster Pack Sound Library	March

Disney Interactive

☎ **0171 734 1133**

Winnie the Pooh Toddler	February
Winnie the Pooh Pre-School	February
Winnie the Pooh Kindergarten	February
Toy Story 2 Print Studio	February
Toy Story 2 Activity Centre	February

Dorling Kindersley

☎ **0171 836 5411**

The Wiggles	February
Test for Success Age 11	March
Three Little Pigs	March

Europress

☎ **01625 855000**

Maths Key Stage 2	February 4th
A-Level Revision Maths	February 4th

Focus Multimedia

☎ **01889 570156**

Teaching You MS Word 2000	February
Teaching You MS Excel 2000	February
Teaching You MS Access 2000	February
Teaching You MS Outlook 2000	February
Teaching You MS PowerPoint 2000	February
GCSE Maths	February
GCSE English	February
GCSE Science	February

GSP

☎ **01480 496789**

Revise GCSE Maths	February 7th
Revise GCSE English	February 7th
Revise GCSE Science	February 7th
Revise GCSE Physics	February 7th
Revise GCSE Chemistry	February 7th
Revise GCSE Biology	February 7th
Revise GCSE Geography	February 7th
Revise GCSE French	February 7th
Revise GCSE German	February 7th
Revise GCSE Spanish	February 7th
The Great Treasure Hunt	February

Mattel Interactive

☎ **01293 651300**

ClueFinders 5 & 6	February
ClueFinders 6 & 7	February
Orly's Draw A Story	February
Oxford University GCSE Guide	February
Elmo's Number Journey	March
Elmo's Letter Adventure	March
Image Factory 200k & 500k	March
ClickArt 40k & 65k	March
Real Homes 3D Designer	March
3D Home Design Suite	March
3D Home Architect	March
Total 3D Landscape	March

Sherston Software

☎ **01666 843200**

Oxford Reading Tree Stage 5	February 20th

Tivola

☎ **0208 255 2442**

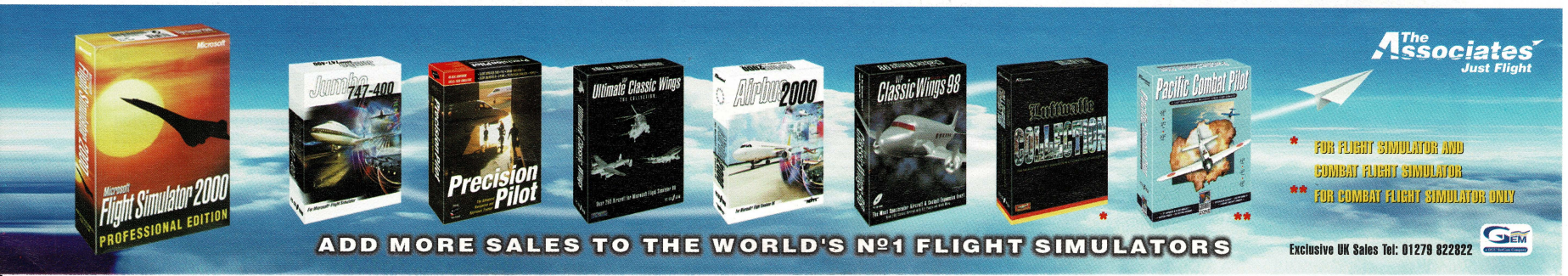
Max on the Moon	February
Oscar Drops into the Countryside	February

To ensure your company's inclusion in this invaluable retail guide to software products arriving outside the mainstream games area, send information and materials directly to **Matt Camp, MCV Media UK, St. Andrew House, 46-48 St. Andrew Street, Hertford, Herts SG14 1JA.** Tel: **01992 535646** Or email details to **Matt.Camp@mcvuk.com.**

REFERENCE TOP 25

1.	Encarta 2000	Microsoft
2.	Geoff Hamilton's Garden	GSP
3.	Britannica 2000 Deluxe	Acclaim
4.	Family Tree	GSP
5.	Encarta 2000 Ref. Suite	Microsoft
6.	Encarta 2000 Deluxe	Microsoft
7.	AutoRoute Express GB	Microsoft
8.	Family Tree Maker 6.0	TLC
9.	Driving Test Success	Focus
10.	Journey Planner UK	TLC
11.	Route Planner Pack	GSP
12.	Grolier 99 Encyclopedia	TLC
13.	BodyWorks 5.0	TLC
14.	Ultimate Family Tree Maker	TLC
15.	Encarta 2000 World Atlas	Microsoft
16.	Mosby's Medical Encyclopedia	TLC
17.	Alan Titchmarsh's Garden	Hasbro
18.	Family Tree	TLC
19.	UK-Info 4.0 Standard	CD ROM Dist.
20.	20th Century Day by Day	D.K.
21.	AutoRoute Express GB/Eu.	Microsoft
22.	Family Tree Maker	TLC
23.	Ancestry	Cosmi
24.	Compton's Encyclopedia 98	TLC
25.	3D World Atlas	Cosmi

Source ELSPA/ChartTrack, December sales


Microsoft Flight Simulator 2000 PROFESSIONAL EDITION
Jumbo 747-400
Precision Pilot
Ultimate Classic Wings
Airbus 2000
Classic Wings 98
Luftwaffe COLLECTION
Pacific Combat Pilot
The Associates Just Flight
* FOR FLIGHT SIMULATOR AND COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR
** FOR COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR ONLY
ADD MORE SALES TO THE WORLD'S Nº1 FLIGHT SIMULATORS
Exclusive UK Sales Tel: 01279 822822

Matt Camp looks at new gaming peripherals for the PlayStation from SpectraVideo and MadCatz, along with PC accessories from TEAC and TechWorks. Also featured is the new external modem from Creative Labs and a PC cheat disc from Datel...

GTO

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **SpectraVideo**
Telephone: **0208 902 2211**
Price: **£24.99**:

SPECTRAVIDEO aims to cheer up the PlayStation peripherals market with this bright yellow GTO steering wheel.

The wheel is fully dual-shock compatible, offering strong vibrations that match the on-screen action.

The sensitivity of the wheel can be adjusted, while a 'Flick Shift' gear system enables quick and easy selection. All the action buttons are mounted on the wheel and the accelerator and brake functions are analog-based for total in-game control.

The base of the wheel is fitted with firm suction-cups and detachable table clamps.

Nice one.

Notebook CD-ROM

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **TEAC**
Telephone: **01923 225235**
Price: **£149 + VAT**

TEAC'S new CD-ROM unit is a stylish companion for a notebook-sized computer.

Looking like an attractive portable CD player, the unit opens like a regular Discman for easy access and offers a 24-speed CD-ROM drive that reads a number of different formats including Video-CD and Photo-CD.

A built in data-buffer of 128Kb makes the unit suitable for multimedia applications, while a headphone socket with volume control allows the drive to be used as a normal audio CD player.

The unit connects to any notebook with a standard PCMCIA slot, though a USB version will be available soon.

Analog Controller

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **MadCatz**
Telephone: **01992 707400**
Price: **£15.99**

THE NEW MADCATZ Dual Force Controller comes with a number of features to help make this stand out of the crowd.

Not too dissimilar in design to the Sony pad, MadCatz' creation includes Twin precision analog sticks and a comfortable D-pad.

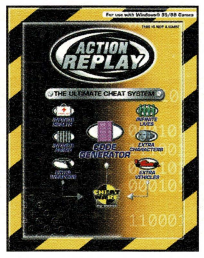
The controller has three different play modes, namely analog, digital and steering wheel. Designed specifically for vibration compatible games, the dual force motors provide strong vibrational feedback when enabled.

A turbo button is also included for players who require an extra helping hand when fending off the opposition.

A versatile pad at a good price.

Action Replay PC

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Datel**
Telephone: **01785 810800**
Price: **£9.99**



THE ACTION REPLAY for PC has been re-designed and re-launched with new features and is the only cheat code system available for the PC platform.

The package comes pre-loaded with hundreds of game cheats including codes for Tomb Raider 4 and Tiberian Sun. Plus a new extra is the built-in code generator that allows the user to create his own personalised cheats.

The interface is mouse-driven making it very easy to navigate. It is also possible to connect to a website for the download of new Action Replay cheat codes.

A top product that should appeal to hardcore PC gamers.

Brilliant.

GamePad USB

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **CH Products**
Telephone: **01494 711811**
Price: **£29.99**

THE SLEEK GAMEPAD USB is the latest PC gaming peripheral from CH Products.

As it is USB based, installation is quick and easy. It means that the pad can be connected while the PC or Mac is running and automatically recognises it.

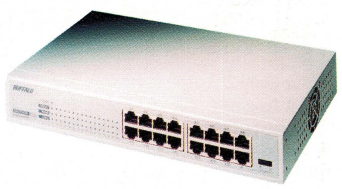
There are 10 action buttons and an eight-way direction pad on the ergonomically designed controller.

It comes with an eight-foot cable, along with all the neccessary installation software.

A smart-looking pad that could prove to be even more attractive to iMac owners who are looking to take control of their games with something other than a keyboard.

Buffalo 8-Port Hub

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Techworks**
Telephone: **01753 677500**
Price: **£135**



THE 8-PORT BUFFALO Hub aims to provide an affordable yet high-performance networking solution for PCs.

Each port is fully auto-sensing and auto-negotiating.

These switching hubs use an internal backplane bus speed of 4Gbps, keeping latency times to a minimum. In addition, the latest Broadcom controller chips are fitted for complete efficiency.

The unit uses low-power components so that the whole unit is small and compact.

A smart piece of kit.

PSX Challenger

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **SpectraVideo**
Telephone: **0208 902 2211**
Price: **£15.00**

THE MARKET is littered with third-party PlayStation pads and the Logic 3 PSX Challenger is the latest entry, albeit an attractive metallic one.

Available in blue, silver and gold, the pads feature turbo and slow-motion buttons ideal for rapid firing or tackling multiple enemies. There are some 10 independent fire buttons, two additional shoulder buttons and an eight-way D-pad.

The PSX Challenger can also be used with NegCon compatable software titles.

If you would like your hardware products featured on this page, contact **Matt Camp** on 01992 535646. Please note that we require a visual and full marketing information.

Modem Blaster Flash 56

Available: **Out Now**
Supplier: **Creative Labs**
Telephone: **0118 934 4322**
Price: **£59.99**

CREATIVE LABS FURTHER expands its range of PC upgrades with the Modem Blaster Flash 56 External modem.

The unit offers high-speed and reliable Internet connection at an attractive price-point. The package includes all the cables and software required for installation, along with a copy of Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0.

Compatability with other Creative Labs hardware opens up the opportunity for video conferencing and webcam applications for websites.

Technical support includes downloadable upgrades from the Creative Labs website.

ORDER TIPS

GT2 may have been the first blockbuster title of 2000, but there are many more to come. Look out for Capcom's Resident Evil 3 on PlayStation and Crazy Taxi for Dreamcast. Meanwhile, the PC is home to The Sims and the breath-taking Final Fantasy VIII...

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Action
Developer: Capcom
Publisher: Eidos
Street date: February 18
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 1 player

Eidos also has Code Veronica due on Dreamcast this year. Features lush visuals, more zombies and the return of Jill Valentine. Also introduces the terrifying Nemesis creature that stalks the player throughout the game.

15+ FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

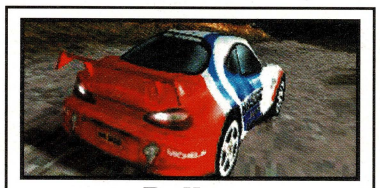
TV £1.8m pan-European TV ad campaign

Print Specialist, trade and lifestyle press ads

Misc. Outdoor poster campaign, nationwide washroom ads, targeted radio campaign

SALES POTENTIAL

A massive marketing campaign coupled with the reputation of the series will ensure another hit for Eidos and retail.



Rally Championship

GENERAL INFORMATION

PlayStation

Genre: Racing
Developer: HotGen
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Street date: February 18
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 2 players

EA's latest racer boasts the Mobil 1 British Rally Championship licence. A total of 22 official cars and 36 stages are available. The usual weather effects are a nice touch as is the visible damage to the various vehicles.

3+ L FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Specialist, lifestyle, driving and national press advertising

Misc. PR campaign across most media

P.O.S. A2 posters and cubes available

SALES POTENTIAL

With GT2 set for a lengthy chart presence, Rally Championship could find it hard to win the race for sales.

TGR 2

GENERAL INFORMATION

N64

Genre: Racing
Developer: Saffire
Publisher: Kemco
Street date: March 17
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 4 players

Unlike rival consoles, the N64 isn't exactly drowning in top quality racing games. TGR 2 is a refreshing addition to the machine's library and features a track editor, up to four players and cars that sustain damage during a race.

3+ FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Ads in Nintendo specific specialist press

P.O.S. Some POS material expected

SALES POTENTIAL

Easily the best racer on the system, TGR 2 will appeal to the N64 consumer base desperate for new titles.

Crazy Taxi

GENERAL INFORMATION

Dreamcast

Genre: Driving
Developer: Sega
Publisher: Sega
Street date: February 25
Estimated street price: £39.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 1 player

The arcade smash, ported perfectly to Dreamcast, offers players a Driver-style experience. Four indestructable cabs are available to drive around the streets of San Francisco, with multiple extra play modes exclusive to DC.

3+ FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

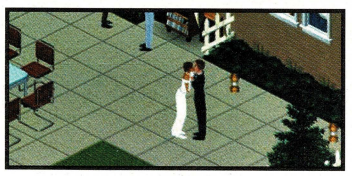
Print Specialist, lifestyle and trade press ads expected

Misc. Sampling at MTV/Lick events

P.O.S. A2 and A4 posters

SALES POTENTIAL

One of the most anticipated DC games, the mad action will provide broad appeal and help Crazy Taxi sell truckloads.



The Sims

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: Strategy
Developer: Maxis
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Street date: February 11
Estimated street price: £34.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 1 player

The latest in the Sim collection allows users to take control of people's lives, rather than whole cities. Keeping the Sims of the title happy is not an easy task and the proceedings can end up resembling the best TV soaps. Quirky.

3+ FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

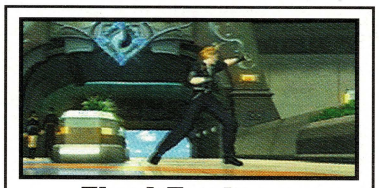
Print Specialist press ads. Mass media ads including The Guardian

Misc. Online ads with specialist game media

P.O.S. A2 posters, dummy boxes, cubes

SALES POTENTIAL

A refreshing change to the usual PC fare, The Sims should enjoy a prolonged shelf life at retail.



Final Fantasy VIII

GENERAL INFORMATION

PC

Genre: RPG
Developer: Squaresoft
Publisher: Eidos
Street date: February 25
Estimated street price: £34.99

PRODUCT INFORMATION — 1 player

The PlayStation version proved that consumers love a good RPG. And this is certainly one of the best. The PC version boasts improved graphics and 3D sound, but underneath the game remains the same.

11+ FP

MARKETING SUPPORT

Print Consumer and lifestyle press ads

Misc. PR campaign covering lifestyle and national press, interactive web site featuring virtual Valentine's cards

P.O.S. Trade POS including posters and oversized boxes

SALES POTENTIAL

Perfect for the PC audience. A great game with incredible depth that should sell by the bucket load.

MCV Hotlist

Get your pre-orders confirmed for these hot titles...

DREAMCAST

Crazy Taxi	Driving	Sega	0208 995 3399	Gem	**February 25th**
Soul Reaver	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**February 25th**
Zombie Revenge	Action	Sega	0208 995 3399	Gem	**March**
Resident Evil 2	Action	Virgin	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	**March**
Tomb Raider 4	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**March 24th**

PLAYSTATION

Toy Story 2	Action	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	**February 4th**
ISS Evolution	Sports	Konami	01895 470500	Open	**February 25th**
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**February 18th**
Resident Evil: Survivor	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**March**

NINTENDO 64

Toy Story 2	Action	Activision	01895 456700	THE Games	**February 4th**
Castlevania 2	Action	Konami	01895 470500	Open	**February 25th**
Pokemon Stadium	RPG	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	**March 31st**
Perfect Dark	Action	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	**April 2000**

PC

Delta Force 2	Action	Novalogic	01908 575600	Gauntlet	**February 4th**
Le Mans 24 Hour	Racing	Infogrames	0161 827 8000	Centresoft	**February 18th**
Final Fantasy VIII	RPG	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**February 25th**
Messiah	Action	Virgin	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	**March**

GAME BOY

Wario Land 3	Action	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	**February**
Dragon Warrior Monsters	RPG	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	**March 3rd**
Resident Evil	Action	Virgin	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	**May**

Key to our weekly product guide

- Indicates that MCV considers the product particularly suitable for in-store display.
- 18+ MCV's predicted voluntary or BBFC rating.
- L Indicates that the game has a licence attached to it. The arrow points upwards if the licence adds value at retail, down if not.
- FP indicates a full-price release, BC is a back-catalogue title. ED indicates expansion disc.

PLANET DISTRIBUTION

TEL.01992 707 400 | The largest distributor of multi-format leisure products in the UK | TEL.01992 707 400

Better than the real thing

Konami's **International Track and Field 2** sprints in, while, the eagerly-awaited **Resident Evil 3: Nemesis** arrives courtesy of Eidos. Also watch out for **The Sims** from Electronic Arts...

	TITLE	FORMAT	GENRE	PUBLISHER	TELEPHONE	DISTRIBUTOR	RELEASE DATE	DEVELOPER
FROM FRIDAY	Dune 2000	PSX	Strategy	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 11th	Westwood
	Ergheiz	PSX	Fighting	Sony	0207 533 1400	Centresoft	February 11th	Square
	Int. Track and Field 2	PSX	Sports	Konami	01895 470500	Open	February 11th	Konami
	Nerf Arena Blast	PC	Action	Hasbro	0208 569 1234	Centresoft	February 11th	Hasbro
	Supercross 2000	N64	Racing	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 11th	EA Sports
	The Sims	PC	Strategy	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 11th	Maxis
	Tiger Woods PGA Tour	GBC	Sports	THQ	01483 767656	Open	February 11th	THQ
FROM 18TH FEBRUARY	Beetle Crazy Cup	PC	Racing	Infogrames	0161 827 8000	Centresoft	February 18th	Infogrames
	Cyber Tiger	N64	Sports	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 18th	EA Sports
	Deadly Skies	DC	Action	Konami	01895 470500	Open	February 18th	Konami
	FA-18	PC	Flight Sim	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 18th	Jane's
	Int. Track and Field	GBC	Sports	Konami	01895 470 506	Open	February 18th	Konami
	Marvel Vs. Capcom	PSX	Fighting	Virgin Interactive	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	February 18th	Capcom
	Rally Championship	PSX	Driving	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 18th	EA Sports
	Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	PSX	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	February 18th	Capcom
	Rising Sun	PC	Strategy	Take 2	01753 854444	Jack of all Games	February 18th	Talonsoft
	Soldier of Fortune	PC	Action	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	February 18th	Ravensoft
	Vigilante 8: 2nd Offence	N64	Driving	Activision	01895 456700	Centresoft	February 18th	Activision
	Business Tycoon	PC	Strategy	Ubi Soft	0208 944 9000	Pinnacle	February 25th	Ubi Soft
	Crazy Taxi	DC	Driving	Sega	0208 995 3399	Gem	February 25th	Sega
	EPGA Golf	N64	Sports	Infogrames	0161 827 8000	Centresoft	February 25th	Infogrames
	Evolution	DC	Action	Ubi Soft	0208 944 9000	Pinnacle	February 25th	Ubi Soft
	F/A-18E Super Hornet	DVD	Flight Sim	Virgin Interactive	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	February 25th	Digital Integration
	Fighter Maker	PSX	Fighting	Virgin Interactive	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	February 25th	ASCII
	Final Fantasy VIII	PC	RPG	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	February 25th	Squaresoft
	Invictus	PC	Action	Virgin Interactive	0207 551 0000	Centresoft	February 25th	Virgin Interactive
	ISS Pro: Evolution	PSX	Sports	Konami	01895 470500	Open	February 25th	Konami
	Janosh	GBC	Action	Infogrames	0161 827 8000	Centresoft	February 25th	Infogrames
	Konami Winter Games	GBC	Sports	Konami	01895 470 506	Open	February 25th	Konami
	LOK: Soul Reaver	DC	Action	Eidos	0208 636 3000	Centresoft	February 25th	Crystal Dynamics
	Muppets	GBC	Action	Take 2	01753 854 444	Jack of all Games	February 25th	Tarantula
	Nox	PC	RPG	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 25th	Westwood
	Risk II	PC	Strategy	Hasbro	0208 569 1234	Centresoft	February11th	Deep Red
	Speedy Gonzales	GBC	Action	Infogrames	0161 827 8000	Centresoft	February 25th	Infogrames
	Superbike 2000	PSX/PC	Racing	EA	01753 549442	Pinnacle	February 25th	EA Sports
	Theocracy	PC	Strategy	Ubi Soft	0208 944 9000	Pinnacle	February 25th	Ubi Soft
	Wall Street Tycoon	PC	Strategy	Ubi Soft	0208 944 9000	Pinnacle	February 25th	Ubi Soft
	Wario 2	GBC	RPG	Nintendo	01703 653377	THE Games	February 25th	Nintendo
	Armada	Dreamcast	Action	Acclaim	0207 344 5000	Open	March 3rd	Metro3D
	Ex. Champ. Wrestling	PC/PSX/N64/GBC	Sports	Acclaim	0207 344 5000	Open	March 3rd	Acclaim Studios
	NBA 2K	DC	Sport	Sega	0208 995 3399	Gem	March 3rd	Sega
	Nuclear Strike 64	N64	Action	THQ	01483 767656	Open	March 3rd	THQ

A to Z

Armada	March 3rd
Beetle Crazy Cup	February 18th
Business Tycoon	February 25th
Crazy Taxi	February 25th
Cyber Tiger	February 18th
Deadly Skies	February 18th
Dune 2000	February 11th
EPGA Golf	February 25th
Ergheiz	February 11th
Evolution	February 25th
Extreme Champ. Wrestling	March 3rd
F/A-18E Super Hornet	February 25th
FA-18	February 18th
Fighter Maker	February 25th
Final Fantasy VIII	February 25th
Int. Track and Field	February 18th
Int. Track and Field 2	February 11th
Invictus	February 25th
ISS Pro: Evolution	February 25th
Janosh	February 25th
Konami Winter Games	February 25th
LOK: Soul Reaver	February 25th
Marvel Vs. Capcom	February 18th
Muppets	February 25th
NBA 2K	March 3rd
Nerf Arena Blast	February11th
Nox	February 25th
Nuclear Strike 64	March 3rd
Rally Championship	February 18th
Red Dog	March 3rd
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	February 18th
Rising Sun	February 18th
Risk II	February11th
Road Rash Jailbreak	March 3rd
Soccer Manager	March 3rd
Soldier of Fortune	February 18th
Speedy Gonzales	February 25th
Superbike 2000	February 25th
Supercross 2000	February 11th
The Sims	February 11th
Theocracy	February 25th
Tiger Woods PGA Tour	February 11th
Vigilante 8: 2nd Offence	February 18th
Wall Street Tycoon	February 25th
Wario 2	February 25th

International Track and Field 2 speeds in

Pre-Sell

Resident Evil 3 Nemesis

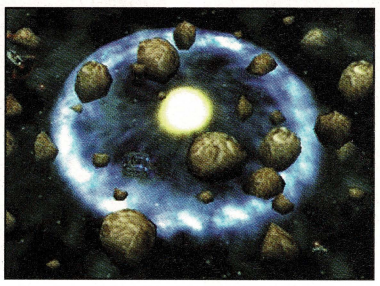
Released: **February 18th**

Format: **PlayStation**

Genre: **Survival Horror**

Publisher: **Eidos**

Tel: **0208 636 3000**



Armada

Released: **March 3rd**

Format: **Dreamcast**

Genre: **Action**

Publisher: **Acclaim**

Tel: **0207 344 5000**

Official PlayStation Magazine
"Creates a believable environment, populates it with a host of evil adversaries and uses Racoon City's urban sprawl to enhance the puzzles" **10/10**

DC-UK
"Armada comes highly recommended as one of the most polished and playable shoot 'em ups since Lylat Wars on the N64 and Einhander on the PlayStation. " **8/10**

PlayStation Plus
"An absolute belter that won't be bettered for a very long time." **10/10**

Dreamcast Monthly
"Those willing to put in the groundwork will, eventually, find a worthwhile challenge." **7/10**

Computer and Video Games
"The sequel stays true to a very basic formula while delivering amazing visual improvements and some new events." **5/5**

Official Dreamcast Magazine
"If retro gaming is your bag and you like your games to be brainless and visceral, then it won't disappoint." **4/10**

Acclaim Release Guide

Title	Format	Date
Extreme Champ. Wrestling	PSX/DC	March 3rd
Extreme Champ. Wrestling	GBC/N64	March 3rd
South Park Rally	N64	March 3rd
Armada	DC	March 3rd
Armorines	PSX	April 7th
Vanishing Point	PSX	April 21st
Fur Fighters	DC/PC	April 21st

Eidos Release Guide

Title	Format	Date
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	PSX	February18th
Final Fantasy VIII	PC	February 25th
Soul Reaver	DC	February 25th
Dragon Warrior Monsters	GBC	March 3rd
UEFA Champ. League 2000	PSX/PC	March 10th
Tomb raider 3 Platinum	PSX	March 10th
Fear Effect	PSX	March 17th
Urban Chaos	PSX	March 17th
Thief 2	PC	March 31st
F1 World Grand Prix '99	PC	March 31st
Nomad Soul	DC	March
Tomb Raider	GBC	March
Deus Ex	PC	March
Disney World Racing	PSX	March
Tomb Raider 4	DC	March
Resident Evil: Survivor	PSX	March
Daikatana	PC	TBC

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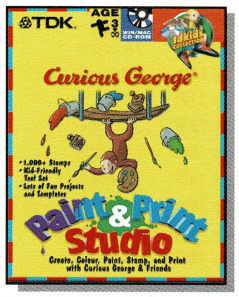

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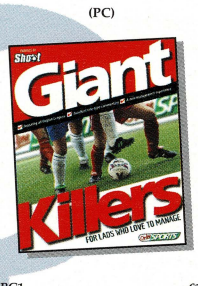

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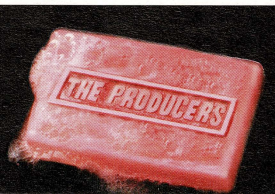

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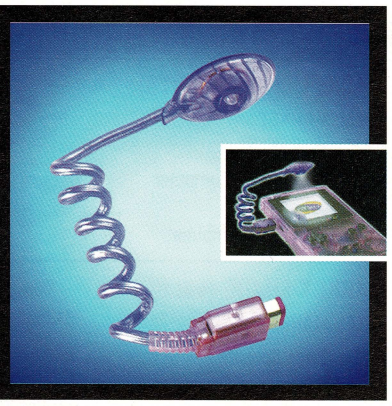

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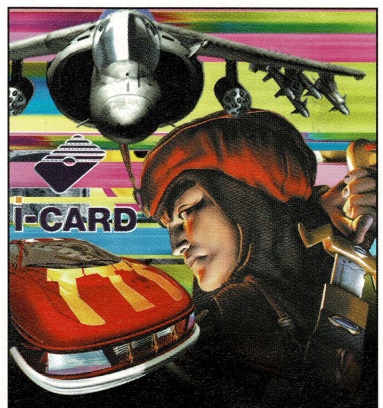

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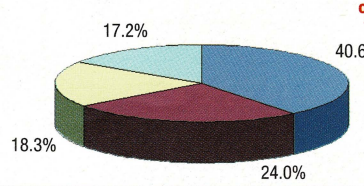
DREAMCAST PLAYSTATION PC N64 GAME BOY

Every week **MCV** brings you an at-a-glance guide to the UK market's top-selling software titles
All data supplied by ChartTrack and ELSPA

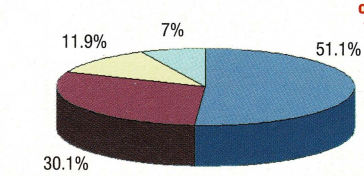
Market Breakdown (Week ending Jan 29th)

MARKET SHARE (UNITS) — **% CHANGE**



	% CHANGE
TOTAL MARKET	+16
Full Price Console	+65
Full Price Home Computer	-2
Budget Console	-9
Budget Home Computer	-1

MARKET SHARE (VALUE) — **% CHANGE**



	% CHANGE
TOTAL MARKET	+24
Full Price Console	+73
Full Price Home Computer	-2
Budget Console	-9
Budget Home Computer	-6

SINGLE FORMAT BEST-SELLERS

Format	Title	Label	Publisher
PLAYSTATION	GRAN TURISMO 2	SONY	SONY
NINTENDO 64	WWF WRESTLEMANIA 2000	THQ	THQ
PC CD-ROM	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 99/00	EIDOS	EIDOS
GAME BOY COLOUR	SUPER MARIO BROS.	NINTENDO	NINTENDO
DREAMCAST	VIRTUA STRIKER 2	SEGA	SEGA UK

ALL FORMATS TOP 40

This Week	Last Week	Title	Label	Format
1	NEW	GRAN TURISMO	SONY	PSX
2	1	FIFA 2000	EA SPORTS	PSX, PC
3	11	MEDAL OF HONOUR	EA	PSX
4	3	CHAMP. MANAGER 99/00	EIDOS	PC
5	2	TOMORROW NEVER DIES	MGM/EA	PSX
6	4	TOMB 4: LAST REVELATION	EIDOS	PSX, PC
7	6	CRASH BANDICOOT 2	SONY	PSX
8	9	COLIN MCRAE RALLY	CODEMASTERS	PSX, PC
9	12	TEKKEN 3	NAMCO/SONY	PSX
10	13	AGE OF EMPIRES II	MICROSOFT	PC
11	10	GRAN TURISMO	SONY	PSX
12	5	VIRTUA STRIKER 2	SEGA	DC
13	16	WWF WRESTLEMANIA 2000	THQ	N64, GBC
14	7	DRIVER	GT INTERACTIVE	PSX, PC
15	28	ACE COMBAT	NAMCO/SONY	PSX
16	15	GRAND THEFT AUTO	TAKE 2	PSX, PC, GBC
17	8	CRASH TEAM RACING	SONY	PSX
18	20	MICKEY'S WILD ADVENTURE	DISNEY	PSX, PC
19	14	WORMS ARMAGEDDON	INFOGRAMES/HASBRO	PSX, PC, N64, GBC
20	31	WWF ATTITUDE	ACCLAIM	PSX, N64, GBC, DC

This Week	Last Week	Title	Label	FORMAT
21	19	DINO CRISIS	CAPCOM/VIRGIN	PSX
22	22	GRAND THEFT AUTO 2	TAKE 2	PSX, PC
23	26	TOMB RAIDER 2	EIDOS	PSX, PC
24	23	CROC	FOX/EA	PSX, PC, SA
25	21	RESIDENT EVIL 2	VIRGIN	PSX, PC
26	29	MUSIC 2000	CODEMASTERS	PSX
27	24	QUAKE III ARENA	ID/ACTIVISION	PC
28	RE	THIS IS FOOTBALL	SONY	PSX
29	18	T. HAWK'S SKATEBOARDING	ACTIVISION	PSX
30	32	SUPER MARIO 64	NINTENDO	N64
31	37	HERCULES	SONY/DISNEY	PSX, PC
32	25	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE	INFOGRAMES	PSX, N64
33	30	RAYMAN	UBI SOFT	PSX, PC
34	17	SHADOWMAN	ACCLAIM	DC, PSX, N64, PC
35	36	COOL BOARDERS 2	SONY	PSX
36	33	FA PREM. LEAGUE MGR 2000	EA	PSX, PC
37	34	THE RUGRATS	THQ	PSX, GBC
38	39	SPYRO THE DRAGON 2	SONY	PSX
39	27	RAINBOW SIX	RED STORM	PSX, N64, PC
40	RE	FINAL FANTASY VII	SONY/EIDOS/SQUARESOFT	PC, PSX

PLAYSTATION: FULL-PRICE

1. Gran Turismo 2	**Sony**
2. FIFA 2000	EA Sports
3. Medal of Honour	EA
4. Tomorrow Never Dies	EA
5. Tomb Raider 4	Eidos

NINTENDO 64

1. WWF Wrestlemania 2000	**THQ**
2. Super Mario 64	Nintendo
3. Donkey Kong 64	Nintendo
4. Super Smash Bros	Nintendo
5. F-Zero X	Nintendo

PC CD-ROM: FULL-PRICE

1. Champ Man. 99/00	**Eidos**
2. Age of Empires II	Microsoft
3. Quake III Arena	id/Activision
4. Norton Antivirus 2K	Symantec
5. Planescape Torment	Interplay

GAME BOY COLOUR

1. Super Mario Bros.	**Nintendo**
2. WWF Wrestlemania 2000	THQ
3. Tom & Jerry	Take 2
4. Zelda DX	Nintendo
5. Yoda Stories	THQ

PLAYSTATION: BUDGET

1. Crash Bandicoot 2	**Sony**
2. Tekken 3	Sony
3. Gran Turismo	Sony
4. C. McRae Rally	Codemasters
5. Mickey's Wild Adventure	Disney

DREAMCAST

1. Virtua Striker 2	**Sega UK**
2. Shadowman	Acclaim
3. Soul Calibur	Namco
4. J. White's 2: Cueball	Virgin
5. Sonic Adventure	Sega

PC CD-ROM: BUDGET

1. Hidden & Dangerous	**Take 2**
2. Virus Scan/Uninstaller	McAfee
3. Virus Scan Classic	McAfee
4. Theme Hospital	EA
5. Broken Sword 2	Virgin

GAME BOY MONO

1. Donkey Kong Land	**Nintendo**
2. Metroid 2	Nintendo
3. Pokemon Blue	Nintendo
4. Pokemon Red	Nintendo
5. Mario & Yoshi	Nintendo

ChartTrack ELSPA

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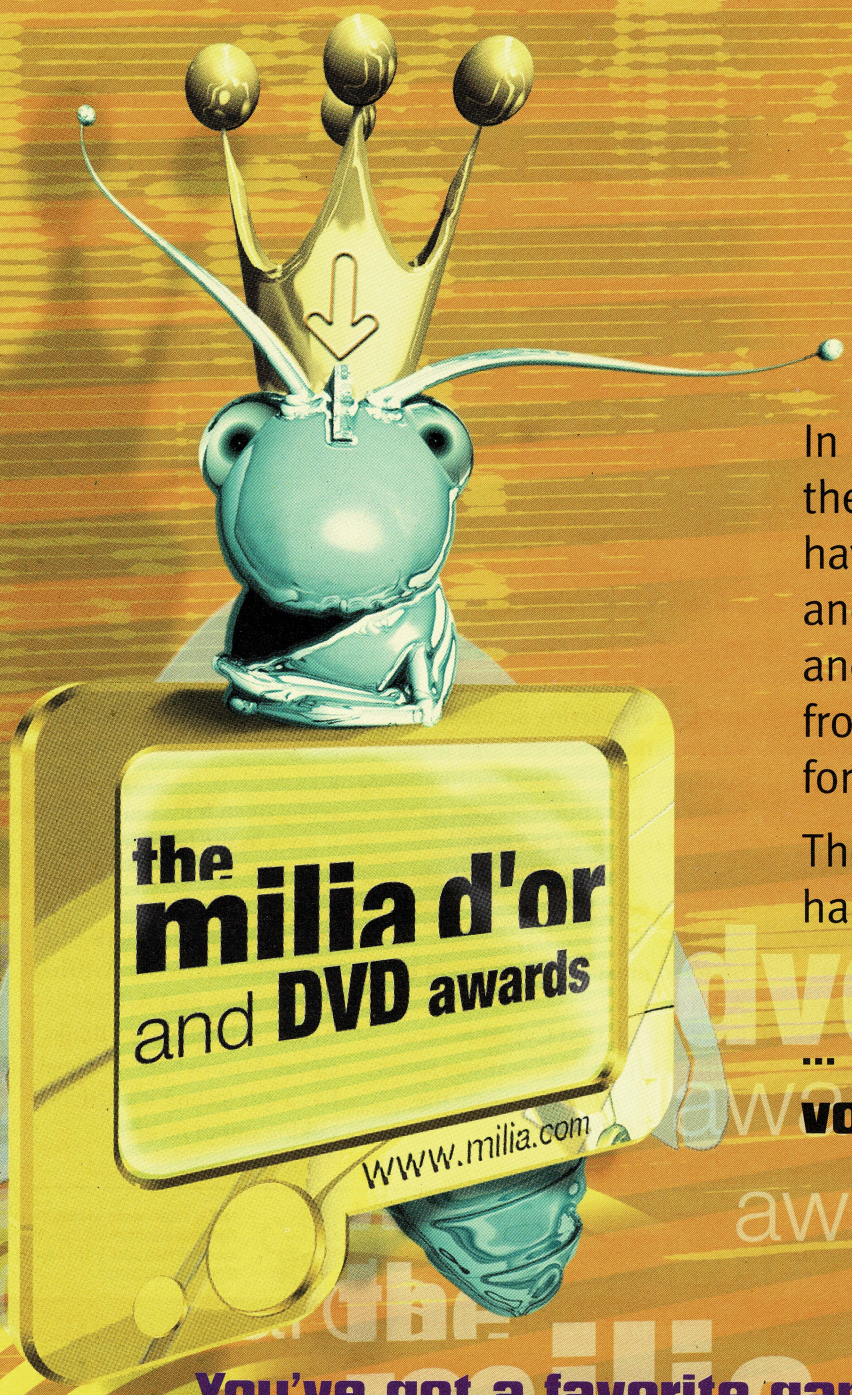

In case you didn't know,
the Milia d'Or in Cannes
have been honoring innovation
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and interactive programmes
from all over the world
for the last six years.

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... and now,
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You've got a favorite game, home reference software title or website... make your voice heard from January 17th until February 11th, 2000

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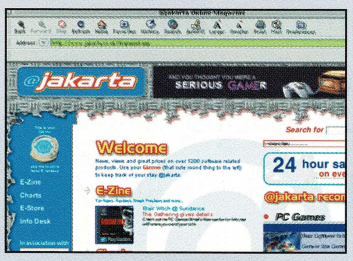
Win An Army

February 11th sees the release of the excellent Army Men: Air Attack on PlayStation. MCV has a PlayStation to give away, as well as a copy of the game and an Army Men PlayStation cover. To be in with a chance of winning this fantastic prize just answer the following question and email mcvproduct@hotmail.com.

What format is Army Men Air Attack available for?

A. Game Gear
B. ZX81
C. PlayStation

Hidden Camera



Dixons continues to underline its commitment to the Jakarta e-commerce games site. A heavyweight national press campaign has recently promoted the special offers available from the online store. Just a shame that when consumers get there, they're encouraged to head off to the rival Game site...

Hall Of Shame

ET

Released: 1982
Developer: Atari
Publisher: Atari
Format: Atari VCS

The Problem: The first ever movie tie-in flop. Anticipating huge sales for its licensed game of Spielberg's movie blockbuster, Atari duplicated millions of cartridges. However, the game was a hot-potch affair with little to really recommend it. ET itself was barely recognisable and ardent games fans opted for Space Invaders and Asteroids over this schmaltzy piece of tosh.

What happened next: Atari allegedly buried over six million unsold cartridges in the Nevada desert and made a huge loss on the title. It was the start of the slide for the firm and its VCS format. Movie licences were unaffected in popularity, though, with today's release of Toy Story 2 proof positive that they can work – if done well.

Not fully up to date with current industry lingo and market trends? Worry not, for Bluffer's Guide is here to help you through those long silences in your next big meeting...

Bluffer's Guide

No.71 A-Life

If all else fails, hardcore gamers can get themselves a life thanks to A-Life games such as Maxis' The Sims

I don't get it.
Soon you won't need to. Instead, Artificial Life games such as The Sims - out next week from EA - will do your living for you.

But didn't Tamagotchi already give birth to A-Life?
More like, revitalised it. Little Computer People on the Commodore 64 had players raising a digital human over a decade ago.

Where else can I find A-Life products then?
Mainly on Dreamcast - because the Japanese are bored of fighting games and schoolgirl knickers, or at least in that combination.

What are they playing instead?
With their Seaman.

I beg your pardon!
Relax, Seaman is a game in which you care for a humanoid haddock and it has injected more life into the Japanese Dreamcast market than a talking fish should. Also big in Japan is Sega's Roommania 203, which focuses on Neji Taihei, a young chap living in a fifteen-foot square studio apartment.

Honestly. Some claim Shen Mue is an A-Life title, given that it involves wandering around supermarkets, buying coke from vending machines and getting ready for bed. But it sounds to us like A-Life-More-Or-Less-Ordinary - which is an entirely different genre.

So what must a title do to get the A-Life tag?
Cambridge based Cyberlife - the boffins behind the Creatures series - reckon you must replicate the workings of DNA, brain neurones, hormones and evolution. Whereas The Sims, the latest offering from Maxis/EA suggests you have to replicate the joys of blowing a wad on a widescreen telly. Our definition: if it goes to the lavatory, it's probably A-Life.

One last thing - what's the difference between Artificial Intelligence and A-Life?
Artificial Intelligence thinks it's clever. Meanwhile, Artificial Life has a gut feeling it's actually talking out of its arse.

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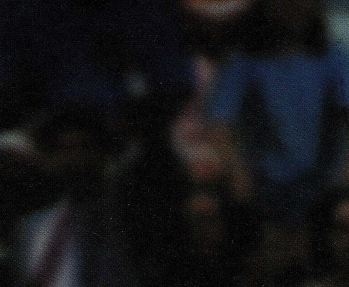

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